

ACTION FOR BOSTON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, INC.

COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN PHASE ONE

OCTOBER 22nd, 2008

CAP

Submitted to: Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development
100 Cambridge Street
Boston, MA 02108
Attn: Tonia Barlow, Program Representative

Submitted by: Action for Boston Community Development, Inc.
178 Tremont Street
Boston, MA 02111
Robert Coard, President and CEO



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- Listing of Community Action Plan Working Group Members
- Presentation of Secondary Source Materials
- Needs Assessment Instruments
- Summary of Survey Data
- Summary of Focus Group Results
- Selected Key Informant Interview Records
- Selected Client Characteristics Analysis
- Selected Planning Group Discussion Materials

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Community Action Plan was developed through the energetic participation of a broad cross-section of ABCD staff and Board members, professional colleagues in other human services agencies, and community residents.

Especially important contributions were made by:

- *Low-income Boston residents participated, through surveys and, focus groups;*
- *The staff and leadership of 37 ABCD programs and service centers, who devoted scarce time and resources to making this Community Action Plan a grassroots product; and*
- *The members of the ABCD Board of Directors' Neighborhood Program Planning and Evaluation (NPPE) Committee, who reviewed and guided our planning activities.*

As a result of the generous contributions made by all of these stakeholders, ABCD has been able to undertake a strategic planning initiative which has not only produced significant products, but which represents a process of learning, sharing and effective linkage development.

INTRODUCTION

In this Community Action Plan, Action for Boston Community Development, Inc. (ABCD) outlines some of the critical themes which will guide the development of Boston's anti-poverty program over the next three years.

The current phase of ABCD's Community Action Plan represents one step in the continuing response to the evolving challenges facing low-income populations in Boston. Because it is a process which is never completed, we know that the ABCD Community Action Plan will be a roadmap rather than a final product. Over the next three years, I look forward to working with our staff and community leaders to make the vision of Community Action an increasingly powerful reality.

Robert M. Coard
President and CEO

Action for Boston Community Development, Inc.
COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN
Fiscal Years 2009 to 2011

August 1, 2008

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this Phase One Community Action Plan (CAP), Action for Boston Community Development, Inc. (ABCD) describes its overall approach to fighting poverty in Boston over the next three years. As in past planning cycles, the Phase One CAP is an initial product which will be developed, refined and updated to reflect continued Community Action Planning discussions at ABCD.

This process reflects a key principle of strategic planning at ABCD: the process must be flexible, ongoing and open to input from all of the constituencies which have a stake in reducing poverty in Boston. This Phase One CAP incorporates an outline of ongoing needs assessment, evaluation, and program development activities.

1.1 Planning Process to Date

The Community Needs Assessment process began during the 2007 program year, with a series key informant interviews conducted by the ABCD Planning Department. During the first seven months of 2008, the Planning Department worked with all of ABCD's central Departments, as well as the thirteen Neighborhood Service Centers (NSCs), Area Planning Action Councils (APACs) and Delegate Agencies which comprise ABCD's Neighborhood Network, to compile survey, focus group, and secondary source information to be used in shaping the Community Action Plan. As this process unfolded, new questions and new opportunities for learning about the needs of Boston's poor emerged. These, in turn, became part of the agency's ongoing approach to continued planning.

- **Community Survey.** A survey instrument was distributed to over 1,900 consumers of ABCD services through the Neighborhood Network, Head Start sites, and central Departments—as well as to other low-income residents of Boston through some of ABCD's partner agencies. While the instrument was based on that used in the previous three planning cycles, it was significantly redesigned to improve the validity of data collected. It was also expanded by the addition of a series of more in-depth questions which solicited information on each respondent's attitudes and concerns about making progress toward self-sufficiency.
- **Compilation of Statistical Data.** ABCD Planning staff compiled a wide range of statistical data reflecting the demographic character of Boston, its physical and institutional infrastructure, and the health and social services needs of its residents. This year, the statistical information was presented in a much more user-friendly format, featuring clearer explanations of the significance of

statistics, discussion of the relationships among key measures, and glosses on the limitations of some of the statistical sources.

- ***Focus Groups.*** The most striking change in this year's Community Needs Assessment process was the expansion of emphasis on focus groups. A total of 15 focus groups were held, involving more than 150 low-income participants. In contrast to the past planning processes, focus groups were held primarily at ABCD's neighborhood sites. A standard discussion template was used to explore basic issues of day-to-day life, with an emphasis on exploring felt needs, community assets, and barriers to economic security.

The expanded focus group format produced a rich base of information, and was well-received by participants, who often asked "When can we do this again?" As a result, ABCD plans to institute periodic neighborhood-based focus groups throughout the planning cycle. Also, because these broad-based discussions did not allow the in-depth discussion of particular topics, ABCD plans to conduct specific issue-area groups as part of ongoing needs assessment.

In this planning cycle, ABCD sought to deepen the involvement of members of the ABCD community at all levels. **Internal Needs Assessment** activities included key informant interviews with agency leaders, a survey of a cross-section of staff members, and surveys and focus groups conducted with members of the Board of Directors.

- ***Key Informant Interviews.*** ABCD Planning Department staff conducted one-to-two-hour structured interviews with agency Vice Presidents, Department Heads and selected Directors of Neighborhood Service Centers and Area Planning Action Councils. These interviews focused on strategic planning issues of specific concern to each individual business unit, as well as issues relevant to the entire ABCD system. In addition, more informal interviews were conducted with staff members in a variety of positions, focusing on the needs presented by clients and the resources staff members felt were needed to respond effectively.
- ***Staff Survey.*** A sample of agency staff from managerial and front-line positions responded to a survey which concentrated on experiences, perceptions and suggestions related to inter-agency communication, client service delivery across program boundaries, and needs for training, shared service standards and mechanisms for coordination. These themes continue to be identified as issues, especially to front-line workers.
- ***Board Focus Group and Survey.*** All members of the ABCD Board of Directors were invited to participate in both a 90-minute focus group and a written survey. The focus group, like others conducted at the neighborhood centers, solicited participants' perspectives on the needs facing disadvantaged communities in Boston, and on how ABCD could best respond to these needs. The mailed survey, in contrast, focused on respondents' experiences as members of the ABCD Board

of Directors, emphasizing issues of transparency, governance and community participation.

Materials developed through the community needs assessment process were shared with members of the ABCD community through a continuing series of publications, meetings and electronic bulletins.

- ***Planning Meetings.*** As in past CAP processes, ABCD used large group discussion meetings as a central forum for sharing information about the CAP process, gathering information, and providing opportunities for input in decision-making. Three large meetings were held, involving representation from all ABCD sites and programs. These large meetings are being followed up by small working group sessions in a set of key issue areas.
- ***Written Documentation.*** Access to the CAP process is broadened through production and distribution of a variety of print documents. These include minutes of all meetings, findings from the community and internal needs assessment processes, and a series of interim reports identifying preliminary conclusions and recommendations. Some of these products become basic resources for managers across the agency, such as the chart book presenting statistical information on low-income residents of Boston.
- ***Electronic Newsletter.*** For the first time, this year's process incorporated use of an occasional electronic bulletin distributed by email across the agency. This device allowed workers and managers access to information which was readily available and easy to assimilate, while adding interest and urgency to news of the process.

As noted above, ABCD sees these initial needs assessment and planning activities as starting points for continued investigation.

1.2 Service Delivery System

As part of the Phase One CAP process, all participants were asked to take part in a review of the agency's services and programs. To accomplish this, a briefer, "capsule" version of ABCD's Annual Workplan was prepared by the Planning Department; this allowed readers to scan the activities and outcomes provided through each Department and Neighborhood Network site. This capsule Workplan, in addition to summary data from the most recent CSBG Information Survey, underlined both the accomplishments of ABCD's service delivery system, and the ways in which it is being challenged by a changing environment.

Review of the Workplan demonstrates the dramatic diversity of ABCD programs, as well as the range of populations being served. Currently the agency manages over 200 separate grants and contracts, representing over \$124 million in revenues, and providing assistance to over 100,000 consumers of services.

Most ABCD programs are managed by *centralized Departments* based in downtown Boston. Each of these Departments has considerable autonomy in establishing its goals and developing new services.

Over the past three years, changes in community needs, funding availability, and interagency relationships have created considerable change in program delivery. While core services—including Fuel Assistance, Child Care Choices of Boston, Head Start, and so on—have continued to provide a stable foundation, these elements of the agency infrastructure are confronting a changing environment, as well. For example,

- ABCD has created a new *Asset Development Department* to respond to the needs of low-income households for basic education in financial literacy, opportunities for savings, and assistance in avoiding problems with foreclosure and excess debt.
- Massive increases in energy costs have taxed the ability of the *Energy Division* to support low-income householders as they struggle with fuel costs. In response, the Fuel Assistance program has entered into partnerships to explore renewable energy sources, expand funding for fuel subsidies and conservation, and plan for winter emergencies.
- *Head Start*, while receiving validation for delivering the highest quality child care through a recent federal audit, is faced with a rapidly changing landscape in early care and education. Head Start is experiencing challenges in recruitment due to very low income eligibility standards. Changing teacher education requirements are also demanding creative solutions for staff hiring, training and retention.
- *LearningWorks*, ABCD's adult education and training center, has launched a nationally-recognized career ladder model in the Community Health Worker Initiative, as well as a new U.S. Department of Labor demonstration program for women seeking to enter the building trades. At the same time, LearningWorks faces the need to further diversify its offerings, and local funding for skills training is shrinking.
- ABCD has launched a new alternative high school, *Ostiguy High*, in response to the needs of youth recovering from substance abuse. At the same time, both Ostiguy High and ABCD's older alternative school, University High, are responding to changes in public education funding by exploring the process of becoming charter schools.

One of the most important characteristics of ABCD's service delivery system continues to be its unique **Neighborhood Network**—an array of thirteen local service centers (Area Planning Action Councils, Neighborhood Service Centers, and Delegate Agencies.) The Neighborhood Network sites can develop their own locally-based service programs; they also collaborate with the central Departments to ensure access to major programs such as Fuel Assistance, EITC, and SummerWorks. This structure continues to provide a responsive framework for promoting community involvement, and delivering programs tailored to meet specific neighborhood needs.

Over the past three years, the Neighborhood Network has experienced significant turnover in leadership, as a new generation of community activists has come to the fore. Several Neighborhood Network sites have expanded significantly, sometimes through focusing on specific issue areas. For example:

- *The North End Neighborhood Service Center* has gained new grant resources to further its programs in elder services. Through new public-private partnerships, the NSC has opened a new site to serve the residents of the geographically and socially isolated West End.
- *The Mattapan Family Service Center* has consolidated its position as a local leader in responding to the foreclosure crisis.
- *The Parker Hill-Fenway Neighborhood Service Center*, serving a community with a large number of Latino newcomers, has initiated an immigration counseling project to complement its array of resources for youth, adults and elders.

However, the Neighborhood Network system continues to be challenged by intensifying needs in the neighborhoods it serves—while resources continue to be very limited. So the CAP process has raised questions about how best to secure the continued vibrancy of this network. For example:

- *How can resources be best developed for the expansion of neighborhood services?*
- *What structures for case management at the neighborhood level work best?*
- *How should centralized programs and neighborhood sites interact to provide the greatest access to services on the part of community residents?*
- *How can effective local programs be replicated across the system?*
- *How can information about neighborhood programs be made more available, both inside and outside ABCD?*

These and other questions raised during the CAP process provide the basis for continued fruitful discussion.

In general, ABCD recognizes that its flexible, decentralized organizational model brings with it many challenges, as well as an unparalleled platform for effective service delivery. In this Community Action Plan process, the need for constant support, renewal

and growth in all parts of ABCD's network was underlined. In addition, participants in the planning process emphasized the need for continued efforts to promote effective communication, coordination and resource-sharing across the ABCD system.

1.3 Goals and Objectives Looking Forward

A series of planning group meetings led to the creation of an ongoing program of action linked with appropriate National Indicators and NG/OMs. The planned action steps included both agency-wide initiatives, and efforts related to the challenges and opportunities facing specific business units.

Use of CSBG Outcome Measures. For the past three years ABCD staff, management and executives have used the national CSBG structure of National Indicators. As part of the Community Action Planning process, ABCD Planning staff met with Department Heads, APAC and NSC Directors, and other staff members to review the structure of outcome measures now in use, to provide training as needed, and to identify any issues.

Goals in Program Development. Much of the planning discussion conducted over the past seven months has focused on the possible responses by ABCD's program areas to challenges and opportunities in the environment.

The following goals for addressing the needs of underserved populations were suggested:

- *To continue expanding the capacity of ABCD services to reach new immigrants and linguistic minorities with appropriate services; and*
- *To develop a wider range of programs meeting the needs of ex-offenders, especially men.*

Specific program area goals include the following.

In the area of Adult Education and Training,

- *To develop a wider range of sectoral skills training programs through enhanced partnerships with employers, unions and institutions of higher education;*
- *To link youth services and adult skills training through an expanded array of "career exploration" options; and*
- *To continue development of a coordinated system of adult education services, through strengthening neighborhood-based resources in this area.*

In the area of Housing,

- *To respond to the massive restructuring of publicly-funded services for homeless families by developing and implementing a comprehensive “Housing First” model;*
- *To establish, through partnership with the Boston Homelessness Prevention Clearinghouse and other organizations, expanded resources for preventing family homelessness; and*
- *To support new supportive housing development through continued leadership of HUD 202 projects.*

In the area of Income and Self-Sufficiency Issues,

- *To expand the resources available to the Asset Development Department;*
- *To link asset development to other ABCD program areas, including Head Start, Housing and Homeless Services, and Adult Education and Training*
- *To support development of statewide systems of support and coordination for asset development.*

In the area of Health Services,

- *To significantly expand efforts to reduce racial and ethnic health disparities;*
- *To continue developing peer support and peer education models of health promotion; and*
- *To promote development of and access to affordable and appropriate health insurance.*

In the area of Elder Services,

- *To expand civic engagement and community service opportunities for elders;*
- *To develop new peer and community support resources for elders, especially with respect to health promotion and care-giving; and*
- *To create more robust and better-integrated services for elders across the ABCD Neighborhood Network.*

In the area of Child Development,

- *To sustain access to high-quality, full-day, full-year child care services for families in underserved communities; and*
- *To continue development of affordable educational options and career ladders for child care professionals.*

In the area of Youth Services,

- *To expand youth employment programs, emphasizing the effective model of “career exploration; and*
- *To create increased options for full-year, comprehensive youth development services.*

In the area of Secondary and Post-Secondary Education,

- *To establish improved linkages to post-secondary education for low-income working adults and at-risk youth; and*
- *To develop expanded resources for youth who are not successful in conventional public school settings through securing the economic base for ABCD’s alternative high schools.*

In the area of Energy Services,

- *To advocate for increased resources for emergency fuel assistance;*
- *To plan collaboratively with other agencies and institutions for anticipated heating emergencies; and*
- *To ensure that low-income consumers benefit from new technologies in renewable energy and conservation.*

A series of agency-wide initiatives were also identified as priorities. Among the problem areas targeted were internal coordination issues, marketing, resource development, and interagency linkages. In many respects, the agency-wide themes continue to be congruent with the areas of emphasis noted in the last Community Action Plan.

Goals in Case Management and Service Coordination. The critical role of assessment, case management and service coordination across individual program boundaries was one of the most active areas of discussion. Participants identified the following goals:

- *To promote effective case management, especially across program and neighborhood boundaries;*
- *To create an increased capacity for longitudinal tracking of client outcomes, especially with respect to the agency-wide overall goal of lifting households out of poverty;*

Goals in Staff Support. Participants also noted continuing opportunities to provide more effective supports to staff members working directly with customers. The following goals were identified:

- *To provide stronger training options for front-line staff and new managers; and*
- *To encourage staff interaction through informal opportunities for information-sharing and socialization.*

Goals in Resource Development. All ABCD divisions expressed unmet needs for resources to expand and strengthen their programs. To help meet these needs, the following goals were identified:

- *To continue strengthening grants-seeking activities through staff training and access to skilled grant-writers;*
- *To increase agency-wide information-sharing and planning around fundraising activity;*
- *To develop effective print marketing tools, including more polished case statements;*
- *To improve agency-wide capacity for list management and tracking of fundraising activities;*
- *To build on the agency's successful track record of special events by ensuring that all divisions sponsored at least one fundraising event annually.*

Goals in Linkage Development. In many agency program areas, participants cited the continuing need to network with other organizations, build positive partnerships, and support effective coalition approaches to problem-solving. The following goals were identified:

- *To ensure that managers and leaders in each program area had a linkage plan in place;*
- *To provide shared information about linkages and inter-agency partnerships across the agency; and*
- *To budget resources and staff time for increased visibility in critical program areas.*

Goals in Advocacy and Community Organizing. Participants in the planning process advocated enthusiastically for increased investment in ABCD's traditional roles of public policy advocacy and community organizing. The following goals were suggested:

- *To publicly affirm ABCD's continued commitment to community empowerment;*
- *To provide training for staff and consumers in tactics and strategies of community organizing;*
- *To continue to integrate public policy advocacy with the development of direct service programs in each of the issue areas important to ABCD.*

Goals in Outreach and Marketing. Participants raised a number of concerns about ABCD's image and visibility with key audiences—including policy-makers, low-income residents, and other service providers. The following goals were identified:

- *To conduct more investigation of ABCD's image and recognition through a focused market study; and*
- *To create a more compelling public image for ABCD through a comprehensive marketing strategy.*

Goals in Planning, Information-Gathering, and Evaluation. To continue the process of "institutionalizing" strategic planning, the CAP process identified five major areas of activity for the next three years.

- *Establishment of ongoing agency-wide strategic planning, including continued program development through issue area work groups.*
- *Continuous needs assessment activity on the local level, including original research and periodic updating of community profiles.*
- *Streamlining of data collection and information management (including resolution of CSBG client data compatibility issues) to allow for uniform*

capture of client characteristics, service and outcomes data.

- *Increased emphasis on the use of customer satisfaction surveys to provide feedback and opportunities for “course correction” in current programs.*
- *Increased use of long-range outcomes measures focused on gains in family self-sufficiency.*

1.4 Linkages

The Community Action Plan process identified major agency linkages by program area and by neighborhood. Additional linkage opportunities, including a select group identified as vital to the agency’s continued growth and development, were also identified.

1.5 Funding Strategies

ABCD’s current funding picture was described and analyzed as part of the CAP process. Trends in funding, unmet needs, threats and opportunities were identified. Based on this information, and overall plan for resource development was outlined.

1.6 Vision Statement

ABCD’s mission has remained fundamentally unchanged in its focus on helping families and communities escape poverty. In this year’s planning process, the agency’s mission was reviewed, as was a vision statement emphasizing empowerment, self-help, and personal responsibility as elements of ABCD’s guiding philosophy.

2.0 AGENCY MISSION AND VISION

ABCD's focus on supporting self-sufficiency and community self-help has remained essentially unchanged since the agency's founding in 1967. In this planning process, ABCD's historical mission was reconfirmed.

However, the planning process also reinvigorated discussion of the way ABCD markets itself and manages aspects of its internal institutional culture. These discussions focused new attention on the mission statement and vision statement as tools for communication. Both statements will be considered in depth over the next planning period (Phase Two.)

2.1 Formal Mission Statement

The agency's formal mission statement (provided below) outlines a broad field of potential activities, unified by their focus on building self-sufficient communities and helping to lift families and individuals out of poverty.

The primary purpose of the corporation is to encourage and promote the improvement of community life in the Boston area, with special emphasis upon, but not limited to, the initiation of programs in education, social services, youth employment and related fields.

In furtherance of and in addition to that primary purpose, to carry on the following activities in the Boston area:

- *To initiate programs and make recommendations concerning the activities of agencies responsible for education, social services, youth employment, and related programs so that Boston can more effectively and efficiently satisfy the educational, economic and social needs of its people;*
- *To help neighborhood leaders and residents participate in planning and carrying out the city's urban renewal program;*
- *To assist Boston's disadvantaged people to make their full contribution to the community;*
- *To provide facilities, personnel, and funds for studies, surveys, and demonstration plans leading to effective programs to be carried out by private and public institutions and agencies directed toward the achievement of the goals of the corporation;*
- *To plan jointly and in cooperation with existing public and private agencies toward the effective utilization of the human resources of the Boston community.*

- *To make outright grants or loans of all or any part of its funds or property, with or without interest, in furtherance of or in connection with the objectives of the corporation;*
- *To engage in such other educational, charitable, or scientific activities as the corporation may from time to time determine;*
- *To acquire by purchase, gift, devise, bequest, lease or otherwise, to own, hold, use, maintain, improve and operate, and to sell, lease, and otherwise dispose of, real and personal property;*
- *To solicit and to accept gifts of money, securities and real and personal property from any firm, person, corporation, trust, association, organization, or agency, of any kind or nature, public, governmental or private, to invest and reinvest the funds of the corporation, and to borrow money and issue evidences of indebtedness therefore and to secure the same by mortgage, pledge or otherwise;*
- *In general to perform and do, either directly or indirectly and either alone or in conjunction or cooperation with other persons and organizations of every kind and nature, all other acts and things incidental to or in furtherance of the accomplishment of the purpose of the corporation, and to use and exercise all powers conferred from time to time by the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts upon corporations organized under Chapter 180 of General Law.*

2.2 Informal Mission Statement

Over the past three years, the following brief statement has been used in a variety of contexts to provide a capsule summary of ABCD's mission.

ABCD's mission is to combat poverty by promoting self-help for low-income people and neighborhoods. It implements this mandate through a decentralized, neighborhood-based structure and a process that provides innovative, practical, and timely programs and services that emphasize education and skilled job training at all levels and develop problem-solving skills for people and neighborhoods. ABCD programs provide opportunities for tens of thousands of individuals and families each year to improve their lives and contribute to their communities, thus offering a significant return on investment for our city, state and nation.

2.3 Vision Statement

To further articulate the shared philosophy behind ABCD's work, in 1996 the following statement of vision was developed by staff and Board members. This vision statement

was re-affirmed in 2002, and modified slightly to emphasize the values of constituent participation, community-building, and social and economic justice.

ABCD's mandate is to promote self-help for low-income families and neighborhoods. ABCD emphasizes empowerment as the most effective means of promoting personal and community success; service models build on community strengths; and individual responsibility is recognized as the starting point for economic and social progress. The following principles are demonstrated not only in the design and delivery of service programs, but in the agency's governance, its relationships with staff and Board members, and its partnerships with other agencies and institutions.

- *Emphasis on empowerment and self-help.* Programs are built on the principle of personal responsibility. ABCD seeks to provide tools, not handouts. As a result, families and individuals which utilize ABCD services develop new skills and resources which allow them to advocate for themselves, increase their earnings, and build supportive peer and community networks.
- *Holistic approach to service delivery.* Services are designed to address issues on the family and community level, whenever possible, and to recognize the multiple, interacting challenges that face families in poverty. Case management approaches are used to help families and individuals take charge of their own futures, and the agency offers coordinated "one-stop" access to the widest possible range of services. ABCD also recognizes — and helps constituents to recognize — the broader cultural, economic and political forces which contribute to persistent poverty.
- *Emphasis on linkage and inter-agency collaboration.* ABCD leads or participates in a wide variety of coalitions and inter-agency groups, with the aim of promoting efficient, seamless services and building supportive communities. Community- and neighborhood-building efforts, like all ABCD services, incorporate constituent participation in program decision – making, and promote civic participation on multiple levels.
- *Sensitivity to cultural and linguistic diversity.* As an inclusive organization reflective of all of Boston's neighborhoods and ethnic communities, ABCD stresses services designed to be linguistically accessible and culturally congruent. ABCD seeks personnel and leadership from all of Boston's low-income communities, and provides staff and constituents with the tools needed to work together effectively in a multi-racial, multi-cultural environment. ABCD services are seen as safe and accessible for linguistic minorities and newcomers, and no one is turned away due to language or cultural barriers.
- *Focus on self-sufficiency.* The basic outcomes around which services are organized are economic security, avoidance of long-term dependency, and family and community independence. This means, in part, that families and

individuals who can increase their income from work are helped to do so, while those who cannot work are helped to assemble a stable and secure array of supports which can reduce the level of crisis in their lives. ABCD also recognizes that no one in our society is completely independent — that the health of families and communities depends on the variety and richness of connecting bonds and interdependencies which can be called on in times of stress. ABCD seeks to support these sources of mutual help.

- *Emphasis on the strengths of family and community.* ABCD draws on the traditional informal networks of Boston's neighborhoods, and on the deep cultural resources of the city's minority communities, to address the changing demands of inner-city life. In work with individuals and families, ABCD honors the endurance and ingenuity required to survive in poverty and believes that these strengths represent the roots of positive change.

3.2 Neighborhood Profiles



Allston-Brighton

Allston-Brighton is the westernmost neighborhood of Boston. With a population of 70,284, Allston-Brighton is second only to Dorchester in size. In addition to many transient students there is a rapidly changing low-income population, including many newly arrived immigrants. Over the past several years, successive waves of newcomer populations have passed through the

neighborhood—currently young Asian families, older Russians, Haitians and Central and South Americans predominate. The 2000 census indicated some of these demographic shifts clearly. While Allston-Brighton remains mostly White population, the percentage of white residents has declined from 78% in 1990 to 69% in 2000. In the 2000 census, 4% of the population reported was Black, 9% Hispanic, and 14% Asian/Pacific Islander. ABCD clients in Allston-Brighton, however, are much more diverse (26.4% White; 27.8% Latino; 20.8% Asian; 16.7% Black), reflecting the over-representation of minority groups among low-income residents. Allston-Brighton's residents are linguistically diverse as well—over a third of residents spoke a language other than English at home in 1990. The 2000 Census also identified 21% of the area's population as non-citizens, but this is clearly an underestimate.

In 1990, approximately 20% of Allston-Brighton's residents lived in poverty. In 1999, 44.6% of ABCD clients in Allston-Brighton reported a monthly income of \$1,000 or less—an amount which falls well below the 1999 federal poverty line for a family of three.

Allston-Brighton has been the traditional home of many of Boston's college students and thus one of Boston's better educated neighborhoods. In 1990, only 12.5% of all Allston-Brighton adults did not have a High School diploma. ABCD's Allston-Brighton clients also reflect this higher state of education—16.7% have earned a BA.

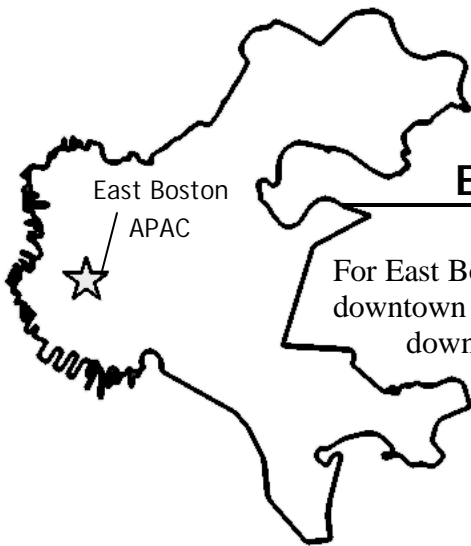


Dorchester

Dorchester is the largest as well as one of the most racially diverse neighborhoods in the City. Within Dorchester many neighborhood enclaves have their own individual character—from Savin Hill to Franklin Field a mix of Irish, southeast Asian, and African communities are identifiable.

According to the 1990 Census, Whites accounted for 49% of Dorchester's residents, Blacks 33%, Asians 4%, Native Americans less than 1%, Hispanics 10%, and other races 3%. In the 2000 Census, the growth of the neighborhoods minority populations is evident. In South Dorchester, a demographically distinct neighborhood, 42% of residents were reported as African-American, 30% White, 10% Hispanic, 10% Asian, and 8% of multi-racial background. North Dorchester represents a significant contrast, as 37% of residents are reported as white, 24% Black, 14% Hispanic, 13% Asian, and 12% of multi-racial backgrounds. ABCD clients in Dorchester also reflect this diversity: 51.5% are Black, 21.1% Latino, 8.4% White, "Other" groups 6.2%, and Native Americans 4.4%.

Both the 1990 Census and ABCD's 1999 client survey data suggest that Dorchester has a higher concentration of young, poor working families than Boston's other neighborhoods. 26.5% of Dorchester total population in 1990 was younger than 18 and 35% of all households were families with children. Also, only 9.7% of Dorchester's adults over 16 were unemployed in 1990—an unemployment rate 0.1% lower than the City average for the same year. Never the less, 15.7% of Dorchester's families lived in poverty.

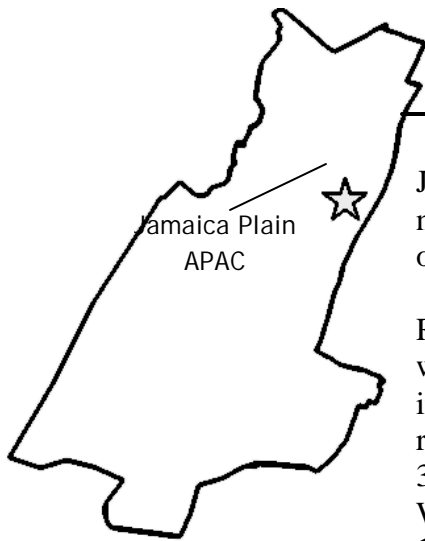


East Boston

For East Boston, the neighborhood's physical separation from downtown Boston has resulted in barriers to accessing downtown human services and the overwhelming presence of Logan Airport has imposed burdens on residents not shared by other neighborhoods. These unique issues are superimposed on those problems common to low-income communities across the City.

The population of East Boston, like the City as a whole, is steadily becoming more diverse. The White, non-Hispanic population of the area declined from 96% of total population in 1980 to 76% in 1990, and is currently 50% by the 2000 census. The minority population (particularly Central and South American) has increased proportionately. In 2000, 3% of residents are reported as Black, 39% as Hispanic, 4% as Asian, and 4% as multiple racial backgrounds.

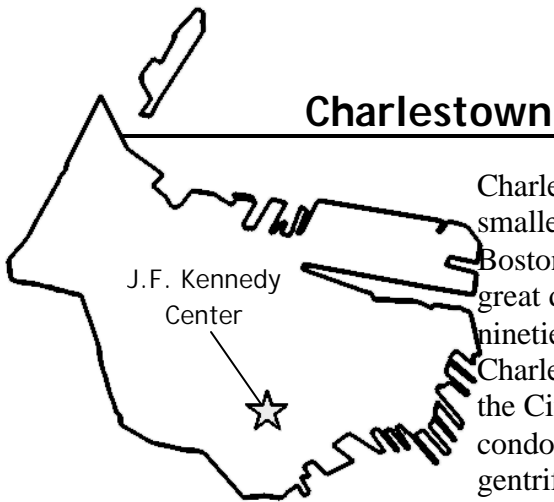
East Boston is also home to many older, long-time residents with deep ties to the community—fully one-quarter of the population was older than 55 in the 1990 Census and 65% of all residents reported being born in Massachusetts. In fact, 56.2% of East Boston residents older than 5 lived in the same residence in 1985 as in 1990. The poverty rate in East Boston (19%) was only slightly higher than Boston's in 1990, yet per capita income (\$8,247) was the third lowest in the city, lagging behind Boston's average by \$3,800.



Jamaica Plain

Jamaica Plain is a neighborhood of diversity—notable not only for its mix of ethnicities, but also for its mix of family and alternative lifestyles.

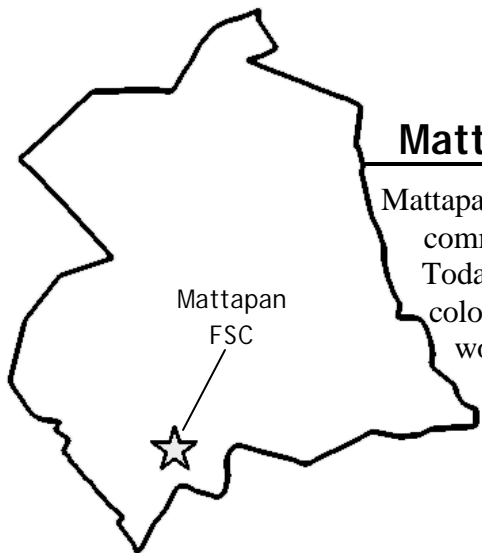
Roughly half of all Jamaica Plain residents in 1990 were White—a percentage which remained constant in 2000. The 200 Census also reported that 17% of residents were Black, 23% Hispanic, 7% Asian, and 3% of mixed race. Only 16.5% of the neighborhood's White households were families with Children in 1990. In contrast, 58.8% of all Latino households and 41.6% of Black households in Jamaica Plain in 1990 were families with children. In 1990, 16.5% of Jamaica Plain's families lived in poverty.



Charlestown, with a population of 14,718, is the smallest of Boston neighborhoods. It is also Boston's oldest neighborhood, and has experienced a great deal of demographic change through the nineties—many young professionals were drawn to Charlestown's historical rowhouses and proximity to the City's center resulting in an increase of condominium development and accompanying gentrification..

As of 1990, Charlestown was primarily inhabited by white, non-Hispanic residents, at 94.9% of the total population. In 2000, this figure had dropped dramatically, to 78%; 4% of the population was Black, 12% Hispanic, 5% Asian, and 1% of multiple racial backgrounds.

The 1990 Census shows a pocket of persistent poverty in Charlestown, and it appears from ABCD's 1999 and 2000 survey data that this small yet needy population is still present. In 1990, 16.4% of adults over 18 had less than a high school education—well below the City average of 22.4%. The unemployment rate was lower than in other neighborhoods (6.8%) and the percentage of those living below the poverty line was 12.7%.



Mattapan

Mattapan started out as a nineteenth century bedroom community of Boston, expanding with the streetcar lines. Today, Mattapan is a somewhat isolated community of color—Mattapan residents have the longest commute to work of any Boston neighborhood.

Mattapan's population in 1990 was predominantly Black (84.1%), including significant representation from Haitian and other newcomer groups, with 23% of the population speaking a language other than English at home. In 2002, the Black proportion of had shrunk to 77%, with 13% of residents reported as Hispanic, 1% Asian, and 9% of mixed race. A large proportion of the neighborhood's 1990 households were families with small children (45.1%), divided about equally between families with two parents present and single parent families.

In 1990, 19% of Mattapan's general population was identified as having attended college without completing a degree. Only 18.7% of Mattapan's residents older than 25 had earned an Associate degree, Bachelor's degree, or a graduate degree by 1990. In contrast, 35% of Boston's adults over 25 had earned a post-secondary degree by 1990.



North End/West End

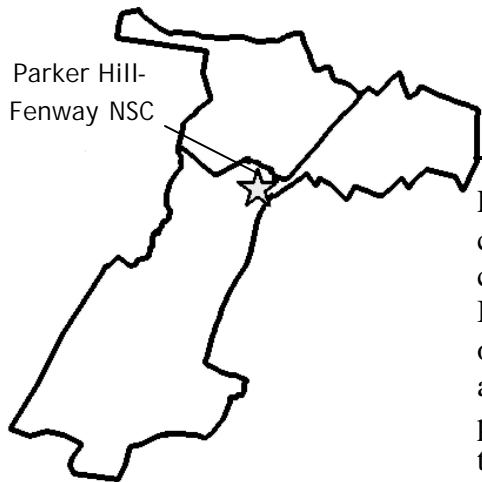
The North End is a neighborhood with a strong immigrant history, which retains a largely Italian character despite much gentrification. A significant feature of the North End in recent years is its isolation from the City's center by the Central Artery Project.

The Boston Redevelopment Authority includes the North End/West End in the "Central Boston" neighborhood displayed above. ABCD has a less extensive service delivery area within that neighborhood known as North End/West End, consisting of the following census tracts: 201, 202, 203, 301, 302, 303, 304, and 305. In the 200 census, "Central Boston" is reported as 70% white, 4% Black, 4% Hispanic, and 21% Asian (a figure which represents the inclusion of Boston's Chinatown)

The North End has become home to many young professionals over the past twenty years. Correspondingly, the North End has a higher than average number of people with considerable education: in 1990, 61% of the North End's residents had earned a BA or graduate degree. City-wide, only 28% of the population had earned a BA or graduate degree by 1990. In contrast, among ABCD's 1999 survey respondents in the North End 54% have less than a high school education.

Other characteristics of ABCD's service population in the North End indicate a great divide between the face of the North End indicated by Census statistics and the need which is covered up by the aggregation of demographic indicators. 62.4% of ABCD client survey respondents in the North End earn less than \$1,000 each month and it is likely that many respondents live on a fixed income, given that 52% are older than 65, and 45.9% receive Social Security. 64.9% of client survey respondents speak Italian at home, while only 8.9% of the population reported speaking Italian at home in the 1990 Census.

ABCD's service population in the area consists mostly of long-term linguistically and culturally isolated immigrants, who are (not surprisingly) primarily Italian. There is also a high ratio of elders to the total population. In ABCD's survey of North End clients, the ages of respondents fell into two major clusters: 30-35 and 63-91.



Parker Hill-Fenway

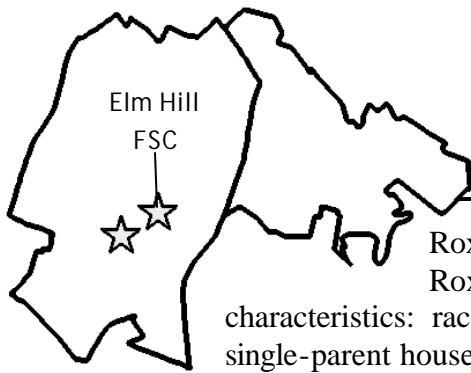
Parker Hill/Fenway is a neighborhood of striking contrasts. This extremely dense, ethnically diverse community—which incorporates significant Latino, Black, White, and newcomer populations—has one of the lowest household median incomes in Boston and one of the highest poverty rates. While public perception often is that transient students dominate the neighborhood (and, indeed, the majority of residents are between the ages of 18 and 24), there is also a large, stable population of families trapped in persistent poverty.

Parker Hill/Fenway has somewhat imprecise neighborhood boundaries. The Neighborhood Service Center in the area draws clients from, and also borders, three BRA-defined neighborhoods: Fenway-Kenmore, Jamaica Plain, and the South End. The area surrounding the Parker Hill/Fenway NSC includes the following census tracts: 101.01, 101.02, 102, 103, 104.01, 104.02, 105, 106, 107, 108, 808, 809, 810, and 811.

Because of the many different kinds of people who reside in Parker Hill/Fenway, the educational attainment statistics for the neighborhood are difficult to judge. According to 1990 Census data for the Fenway-Kenmore neighborhood, 94.6% of neighborhood residents older than 18 have completed high school or a more advanced degree, but only 88.5% of neighborhood residents older than 25 have done the same, perhaps indicating a disparity between the more stable population of the neighborhood and the students who leave the area by the time they reach 25. (In other neighborhoods, the difference between residents older than 18 and residents older than 25 on this particular measure, varies from less than one percent to three percent.)

Also of interest are poverty rates for different age groups from the 1990 Census. Residents of college age (18-20 years old) reported a poverty rate of 56.3%, a number to be expected from a large concentration of students. Just as striking though, is the poverty rate of 58.1% for five-year-olds in Fenway-Kenmore—more than double the city-wide rate of 28.3%.

There is an extraordinary concentration of technical and academic resources located in the neighborhood—including the hospitals of the Longwood Medical Area, and major colleges and universities such as Northeastern and Harvard Medical School. These institutions create jobs and wealth; one of the principal missions of the NSC is creating bridges between disadvantaged residents and the economic opportunities represented by their institutional neighbors.



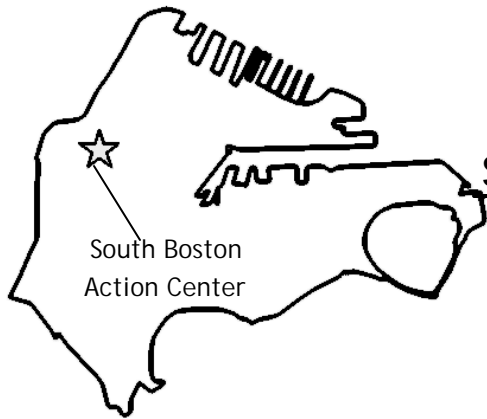
Roxbury/North Dorchester

Roxbury is the geographic heart of the City. Today the Roxbury/North Dorchester area has the following characteristics: racial diversity, the presence of a large number of single-parent households and non-citizen households, lower-than-average educational attainment, and a high poverty rate.

Roxbury is the third largest neighborhood in Boston, with a population count of 58,759 in 1990. North Dorchester had about 25,198 residents in 1990. Ethnically, these two neighborhoods are very different—Roxbury historically has had the largest Black population in the City—70% of the neighborhood in 1990, declining to %63 in 2000. (In percentage terms, this concentration of Black residents has now been exceeded by Mattapan, at 70% in 2000). The 2000 Census also reported that 24% of Roxbury residents were Hispanic, 17% Asian, 7% of mixed race, and 5% white.

North Dorchester remains more diverse: 52.3% White, 21.3% Black, and 13.3% Latino in 1990, the 2000 Census figure show 37% white residents, 24% Black, 14% Hispanic, 13% Asian, and 12% of mixed racial background. Other familiar characteristics of poverty, however, make these two neighborhoods rather similar.

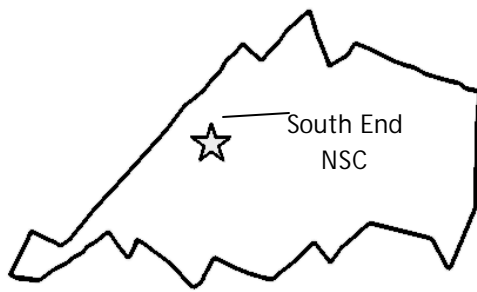
Both neighborhoods have a large number of single-parent families. In 1990, 24.3% of Roxbury's households were headed by a single female parent—nearly triple the City's rate of 9.2%. Other kinds of families are poor as well in Roxbury and North Dorchester. In fact, 27.1% of all families in Roxbury and 17.6% of all families in North Dorchester lived below the poverty line in 1990. As is consistent with poverty measures around the country, younger children experience considerable more poverty than families in general in these two neighborhoods. In 1990, 43.6% of children in Roxbury and 32.5% of children in North Dorchester younger than eleven lived below poverty, making them some of the poorest children in the City, which had an overall poverty rate of 28.8% for children under eleven.



South Boston

Where the North End is traditionally thought of as Italian, South Boston is frequently considered “Irish”. It is a close-knit neighborhood. Of all Boston’s neighborhoods, Southie natives are more likely to settle down in the neighborhood they grew up in than any other part of the City.

South Boston’s total population in 1990 was 29,495, of which 96% was White. While minority populations have increased in South Boston, change has been relatively slow: the 2000 Census shows a population of 86% White, 2% Black, 7% Hispanic, 4% Asian, and 1% of mixed race. Diversity is however reflected in other kinds of demographic measures, such as educational attainment and household income. According to the 1990 Census, 75% of South Boston’s adults older than 25 have earned a High School diploma or post-secondary degree (AA, BA, professional, or graduate degree).

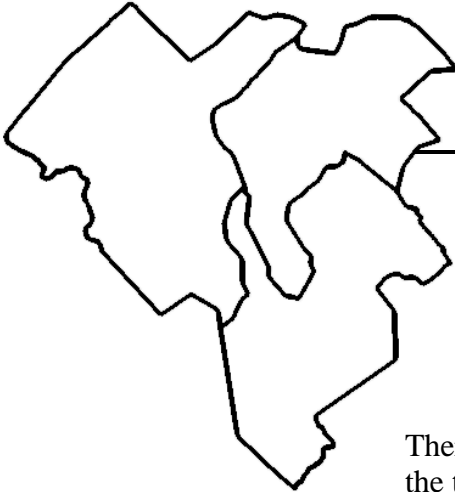


South End

The South End, like Charlestown, experienced significant demographic change in the 90s. What had traditionally been a Black neighborhood began a process of transformation around the turn of the decade, beginning with the growth of a gay sub-culture, and slowly developed into full-tilt gentrification.

The population of the South End remains one of the most racially diverse in the city. The 1990 census recorded a population 40.0% White, 31.9% Black, 12.2% Asian, and 15.2% Hispanic. By 2000, gentrification has fueled an increase in white population to 46%; the Black population had declined in percentage terms to 23%, and Hispanic and Asian populations were at 17% and 12% respectively. At least 30% of the neighborhood did not speak English at home in 1990. A very low percentage of the South End's households are 2-parent households—the majority of households are considered non-traditional, consisting of unrelated adults living together.

The South End had a relatively low unemployment rate of 8.9% in 1990. All of the census tracts with poverty rates over 50% are in the South End; the poverty rate of 23.4% is the third highest of all Boston neighborhoods, and significantly higher than the Boston average.



West Boston/Southside

Traditionally, “West Boston” comprises the three contiguous neighborhoods of Roslindale, West Roxbury, and Hyde Park. These are largely stable, middle-class and working-class enclaves; however, they include significant pockets of poverty.

There are also significant demographic differences among the three neighborhoods. In the 2000 Census, West Roxbury is the least diverse, with 83% of the population reported as white, 6% Black, 5% Hispanic, 4% Asian, and 2% mixed race. Roslindale has an emerging immigrant community which contributes to population percentages of 37% Asian, and 12% mixed race. Hyde Park is poised to become a minority-majority in this decade with percentages of 44% White, 39% Black, 13% Hispanic, 1% Asian and 3% mixed race.

4.0 ABCD's SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM

ABCD provides services through centralized departments whose operations are city-wide, as well as through its network of neighborhood-based service centers: the Area Planning Action Councils (APAC's), Neighborhood Service Centers (NSC's) and delegate agencies.

These elements of the ABCD service system work together, offering the capacity to:

- *Respond flexibly to local needs by developing specialized neighborhood service programs;*
- *Involve community residents directly in shaping and delivering services in their neighborhoods;*
- *Connect large, city-wide programs to underserved communities, with easy access through geographically convenient and culturally competent local sites;*
- *Provide a constant flow of information on community needs to program planners and evaluators across the agency; and*
- *Provide resources and expertise from the city-wide infrastructure to local programs.*

Consequently, a review of ABCD's service delivery system involves looking at both the large, centralized programs and the Neighborhood Network of local service centers. It also involves exploring the connections between these two major elements of the ABCD system—and analyzing gaps, barriers and issues to effective service integration.

4.1 ABCD Central Departments

ABCD's centrally-managed line departments provide a range of direct services to meet the changing needs of Boston's low-income residents. In addition, staff departments (for example, Finance, Human Resources, Property Services and Planning) provide the tools and expertise needed by all direct-service staff.

In the following section, brief descriptions are provided of each of ABCD's centrally-managed line departments.

Asset Development Services

Over the past 18 months ABCD has established a new department—Asset Development—that is devoted to addressing issues of wealth creation in the low-income communities of Boston. The Asset Department has grown rapidly, establishing an array of new programs and integrating them with previous efforts such as ABCD's EITC campaign.

Individual Development Accounts. Using a combination of state, federal and local resources, the Department has initiated a new Individual Development Account (IDA) assisted savings program.

Financial Literacy Education. To provide basic information about personal financial management, the Department has created a variety of training programs for low-income youth and adults. Training has been provided to staff and consumers in SummerWorks and the ABCD Housing Department, among others, as well as to members of the general public.

Free Tax Assistance and EITC Access. Building on ABCD's strong history with the Boston EITC Coalition, the Asset Development Department has expanded free tax services through Neighborhood Network sites. EITC services have also been linked to outreach and education about other benefits (such as health insurance) as well as to other asset-building resources such as financial literacy education and banking options.

Foreclosure Prevention. Building on the groundbreaking work of ABCD's Mattapan Family Service Center, the Asset Development Department has established new resources for helping consumers deal with the foreclosure crisis.

Education, Training and Youth Services

ABCD currently provides education and employment-related services for adults and young people through a single division, "Education, Training and Youth Services." Over the past three years, this division has weathered significant funding challenges, which called for constant effort to develop new resources. The division also consolidated a leadership position in local advocacy and policy discussion, and has added major new

projects to its portfolio. However, challenges in funding and competition continue to loom large. Innovation in the design of new programs, development of productive industry partnerships, and aggressive pursuit of new funding will continue to be critical in maintaining this set of core services.

LearningWorks. ABCD's skills training and education programs for adults were unified in 1997 through the development of "LearningWorks", a one-stop center for workforce development services specialized to the needs of low-income, disadvantaged populations. ABCD LearningWorks is a formal partner of JobNet, one of three state-funded One-Stop Career Centers in Boston. JobNet is operated by the Massachusetts Department of Education and Training.

LearningWorks provides walk-in access to a broad range of resources for individual jobseekers, including assessment, vocational counseling, referral, and job search assistance. Services to employers include help with recruitment, screening and referral of prospective employees, and development of specialized education and training programs—designed to help new or "incumbent" workers meet industry needs. The LearningWorks facility at 19 Temple Place in downtown Boston provides a self-contained setting, including classrooms and computer labs, for services to jobseekers and employers, including a range of targeted programs offering education, skills training and peer support.

Adult Skills Training. Over the past three years, ABCD's vocational training programs have sought to take advantage of growing industry areas which offer viable career ladders and the opportunity to move toward sustained self-sufficiency.

Community Health Worker Initiative. A major multi-year grant from the SkillWorks funders' collaborative launched this new career-ladder project, which has achieved significant early successes as well as national visibility. The project is based on a broad-based coalition of more than 30 employers, training partners, institutions of higher education, unions, and advocacy organizations. It aims to create a widely accepted career pathway for training and advancement in the emerging field of Community Health Work.

Early Care and Education. Child care training is an area of vocational preparation which becomes ever more important as the Commonwealth moves toward "universal preschool" as a major human services goal. In its entry-level training programs, ABCD LearningWorks leverages its strong connections with ABCD Head Start, the Urban College of Boston, and Child Care Choices of Boston. This program focus also benefits from longstanding partnerships with private-sector child care providers such as Bright Horizons, Inc. and Arbor Associates.

GATE. As part of ABCD's commitment to working with the "hardest to serve", LearningWorks undertook a new contract with the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance to provide work-readiness and job placement services for ABAWD recipients (able-bodied adults who are receiving Food Stamps.) Work with this

challenging population has benefitted from ABCD's longstanding participation in statewide Food Stamp advocacy.

ARISE. In this collaborative project with Roxbury Community College, 35 young people will obtain a college-level certificate in medical office management.

Adult Literacy and GED Programs. ABCD adult literacy programs continue to provide basic educational services to adults over age 18.

GED Preparation. Through current LearningWorks offerings, participants attend GED classes and receive counseling and assistance in job search or job upgrading, as well as help accessing a wide range of services provided by ABCD and other organizations.

Adult Basic Education. ABCD offers an ABE program which accepts students at very low entry levels of literacy, and which helps them progress academically and vocationally.

GED to College Project. Through a demonstration grant from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, the "College Pathways" project provides case-managed support and classroom educational transition services designed to help GED recipients move on to higher education.

Youth Services. Development of a more coordinated and more robust framework of youth services has been a major strategic goal for ABCD. Over the past three years these efforts have borne fruit—in the growth and development of new programs, and in the consolidation of ABCD's position as a local leader in the field. The recent creation of newly renovated, shared space for youth programs has helped to create a vibrant public image as well as more opportunity for cross-program collaboration.

University High School. This alternative high school for at-risk students, operating in cooperation with the Boston Public Schools (BPS), continues to post exceptional results. Students complete a curriculum which emphasizes academics, life skills and the transition from school to work; they receive a diploma from their home high school. A summer school program for at-risk youth across the City is also offered with BPS support. Funding and organizational changes at BPS have prompted a school-wide planning effort to consider whether pursuing Charter School status would be beneficial in securing the school's financial future.

Ostiguy High School. A very important addition to ABCD's youth services programming is this new alternative high school, focused on the needs of young people in recovery from substance abuse. Launched with demonstration funding from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Ostiguy was only the second "recovery school" in Massachusetts. The school combines an intensive but flexible approach to academics with life skills, career preparation, comprehensive support services, and clinical services offered in partnership with the Foundation. Ostiguy High has graduated two classes to

date.

Teen Parents Programs. Specialized education and family development services are offered to teen parents through funding from the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance. Teen parents pursue the GED through a classroom program based at ABCD LearningWorks, which is offered as part of a comprehensive array of “wrap-around” supports.

SummerWorks. For over 30 years SummerWorks has provided summer jobs and educational opportunities to low-income Boston youth ages 14 – 21. Participants work with neighborhood groups, non-profit and governmental agencies, and other public and private organizations across Boston. SummerWorks was a national leader in implementing “work-based learning” approaches for disadvantaged youth, in which day-to-day experience on the job is linked with academic competencies.

Currently, SummerWorks is in the midst of a new set of program transitions. The Youth Services Division is seeking to move the program toward delivery of a year-round model, with a focus on the highly successful model of “career exploration” which ABCD developed with a variety of industry and educational partners. This transformation is being supported by ABCD’s major private sponsors, including State Street Bank and Citizens Bank, as well as by state and local government funders.

Year-Round Career Exploration. The new model of “Career Exploration”—structured work-and-learning programs adapted to the specific needs of at-risk youth—has become a centerpiece of ABCD’s youth services.

Career Exploration responds to recent research which shows that disadvantaged adolescents have little or no practical awareness of their career choices, and of the academic requirements associated with career success. At the same time, we now know that at-risk youth can develop much stronger attachments to school and work if they have the chance to get “hands-on” experience in a job that interests them.

ABCD’s Career Exploration program offers 6-to-8 week modules in a wide range of fields (currently including information technology, early care and education, automotive mechanics, construction trades, “green” technologies, and health careers.) These modules combine work-readiness with training in actual career competencies. The program is year-round, offering counseling, recreation, school support and summer employment as well as the chance to experience a variety of potential careers.

Housing Programs

ABCD continues to be deeply engaged in the crisis of housing affordability in Boston. Historically, the agency’s Housing and Homeless Services Department concentrates on the delivery of eviction prevention, housing search, and post-placement stabilization services. “Bricks and mortar” housing development is conducted by staff of the agency’s

Property Services Department. And, most recently, the Asset Development Department has begun to offer homebuyer counseling and foreclosure prevention services. Recently, all of these program areas—and the Housing and Homeless Services Department in particular—have faced intensifying challenges as the housing market experiences turbulence and state policies shift.

ABCD Housing and Homeless Services Department

The Housing Services Department works primarily with families and individuals who are homeless or at immediate risk of losing their housing. These are among the poorest and most deeply disadvantaged households served by ABCD. In addition to having extremely low incomes, a significant percentage are affected by mental illness or substance abuse, domestic violence, or incarceration.

Homeless Assistance Program (HAP). The core purpose of this program, funded through the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) has historically been twofold: to find permanent housing for homeless families who receive public assistance and are living in Emergency Assistance (EA) funded shelters, and to prevent homelessness among EA-eligible families. For homeless families, housing workshops, individual counseling, aggressive housing search, assistance with move-in costs, and post-placement stabilization are provided. The 2007-2008 DTA contract contained significant changes in reimbursement structures, and also eliminated homelessness prevention as an allowable activity. These changes created concern across the statewide HAP provider network, and while ABCD's programs adapted successfully, the effort demanded of staff and supervisors was substantial.

Homelessness Prevention. Eviction prevention has been an important part of ABCD's housing programs for more than 20 years. To prevent loss of housing, the program may intervene with landlords, provide representation in Housing Court, and assist tenants in paying rent and utility arrearages. ABCD continues to partner with the Boston Homelessness Prevention Clearinghouse to coordinate with other agencies providing prevention services.

Major Changes in the Policy and Program Environment. The environment in which the Housing Services Department works is being dramatically affected by changes in state policy for homeless and at-risk families, especially as these changes are embodied in contracting for services through the Department of Transitional Assistance and new initiatives sponsored by the Interagency Commission on Housing and Homelessness.

- *Department of Transitional Assistance.* As noted, over the past years ABCD has successfully adapted to constant change in HAP contracts, including a number of different performance-based reimbursement structures. The implementation of flexible funds (the "toolbox") available to pay arrearages or new housing costs for client families has been a positive change. Currently, a new RFP for services to homeless families (to fund services beginning in January 2009) appears likely to create massive reorganization in homeless service systems. ABCD is working

actively with funders, other providers and advocates to help ensure that this change supports improved outcomes for clients.

- *Interagency Commission on Housing and Homelessness.* The ICHH plans to release a Request for Proposals in September, 2008 to support pilot programs designed to reduce homelessness in six regions across the state. ABCD is working with the City of Boston Emergency Shelter Commission and a diverse group of providers to craft a response for Boston.

Housing Workshops. In order to provide housing assistance to a broader range of low-income households, the Department conducts an ongoing series of workshops on housing search, housing law and regulations, and tenant/landlord rights and responsibilities. These workshops are open to all ABCD clients, as well as to persons referred by other social service agencies.

“No Place Like Home” Rental Assistance Fund. This fund accepts charitable donations toward the moving costs and initial rental expenses of homeless families and individuals. This activity is supported by the “Keeping a Roof Over Their Heads” charity auction and other private fundraising activity.

Supportive Housing Program (SHP). This homeless prevention program, established with funding from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), assists homeless individuals and families in locating housing and in stabilizing their living circumstances. The clients served by this program frequently have complex histories of substance abuse, mental illness, and involvement with criminal justice systems.

Home Base Program. ABCD continues to work with the Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership, shelter providers and the City of Boston to deliver a Federal demonstration grant seeking to provide linked housing and employment services for homeless individuals with mental health and/or substance abuse issues.

MassFHAN. ABCD has continued to host and support this statewide coordination group for family housing search providers.

Housing Development

Historically, the ABCD Property Services Department has provided the agency with professional expertise in the areas of property acquisition, design, construction, and maintenance. Utilizing these competencies, Property Services has provided leadership in ABCD’s creation of new housing for low-income residents. In the past, the Department has developed affordable ownership units, as well as subsidized rental housing.

Most of ABCD’s housing development activity has been accomplished through the mechanism of the HUD 202 program, which supports creation of new affordable rental housing for low-income elders. ABCD’s HUD 202 projects include 45 units of new

construction in Mattapan Square, completed in 1997; 72 units in the North End, completed in 2000; and 45 units in the Geneva Avenue neighborhood of Dorchester, completed in 2003. ABCD is currently developing a new 45-unit 202 project in Dudley Square, Roxbury.

The HUD 202 program has been a good vehicle for ABCD for several reasons: it focuses on a high-need population the agency serves; it allows ABCD to capitalize on its strengths in design and construction management; it does not involve long-term property management obligations (because properties are turned over to a separate single-purpose nonprofit owner entity); and, until recently, the HUD grant covered almost 100% of construction costs. Over the past three to six years, rising construction costs have meant that ABCD has needed to assemble an extensive and sometimes complex package of grants to complete these projects.

ABCD continues to seek other affordable housing development opportunities, as well. However, the Board and management continue to be conservative in evaluating the cost and risk entailed in building housing.

Health Services Department

Historically, ABCD's Health Services Department has provided access to family planning and reproductive health services city-wide through the City's Neighborhood Health Centers. However, the Department's mission has continued to expand. The Department now responds to a broad range of emerging health needs in Boston's low-income populations, such as AIDS, tuberculosis, breast cancer, men's health issues, and issues of racial and cultural health disparities.

Family Planning. ABCD provides comprehensive family planning, reproductive health and sexuality education through a variety of means—including partnerships with neighborhood health centers, home-based peer education, and train-the-trainers activities which reach direct services staff in community-based social-service programs. In addition, family planning services are offered through 34 clinical service sites, and at school-based health centers.

Mens' Preventative Health Counseling. Over 400 low-income males receive counseling annually about a wide range of reproductive and sexual health issues through this program, which operates in conjunction with the Men of Color Primary Health Care Program at Whittier Street Health Center.

Women in Transition: Health and Hope (WITHH). This 5-year grant from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMSHA) combats substance abuse and HIV infection among women of color. It incorporates a major partnership with Whittier Street Health Center, and a rigorous evaluation component being delivered through JSI Research and Training Institute.

Entre Nosotras. Over 200 women from Boston's diverse Latino communities participate in this groundbreaking model of home-based reproductive health and STD prevention services. Information sessions are facilitated by a cadre of trained community residents. Outreach is conducted through a network of beauty salons and other community businesses. Like other Health Department initiatives, this program is powered by collaboration: among the partnering agencies are Mujeres Unidas en Accion, Centro Latino de Chelsea, and AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts.

ABCD CARES. The Health Services Department continues to reach out to incarcerated women through this program, which provides health care and discharge planning services to over 100 inmates annually.

Health Disparities. Health Services provided "incubation", technical assistance and spin-off help to Critical Mass, a state-wide advocacy and public education coalition devoted to raising awareness of racial and ethnic health disparities, and promoting effective community-based responses. Critical Mass is now separately incorporated, and has a permanent home at the Center for Community Health Education Research and Service (CCHERS) at Northeastern University.

Staff from ABCD's Planning Department co-authored a new publication from Critical Mass, "Taking Community Action on Health Disparities: A Critical Mass Tool Kit," which has been widely hailed as an important step in implementing local plans to reduce disparities.

Energy Department

ABCD's Energy Programs incorporate Fuel Assistance (the Low-Income Heating Emergency Assistance Program), cooling assistance, water conservation, utility-funded consumer demand reduction programs (including electricity audits and major appliance replacement funded through Boston Edison), heating system repair and replacement (HEARTWAP), and Weatherization. The Department continues to explore additional opportunities to develop new energy conservation and pollution prevention measures.

REACH/LASER. This Federal demonstration grant, which introduced elements of a comprehensive case management approach to the day-to-day operations of the Fuel Assistance program, is coming to a close; however, it has provided enormous impetus to the development of shared family support systems across the agency. Implementation involved development of family self-sufficiency assessment tools, creation of new information and referral resources, staff training in needs assessment and case planning, and design of new mechanisms for staying in touch with Energy program clients.

Expanded Utility-Funded Conservation Services. ABCD has worked very closely with the state, with major Boston-area utilities and with other Community Action Agencies to help manage an enormous expansion in the volume of resources flowing to low-income consumers from the regulated utilities in the form of energy conservation improvements. Currently, these funds are the dominant source of support for conservation.

“Green” Energy Initiatives. ABCD’s participation in LEAN-sponsored “green” initiatives has positioned the agency on the leading edge of new technologies for conservation and renewable energy sources.

Child Care Services Division

In 1998, ABCD merged its Head Start and Day Care Departments to provide a unified approach to meeting the critical child care needs of low-income communities. These Departments, together with Child Care Choices of Boston (CCCB), continue to represent the largest share of the agency’s revenues and expenditures, and a major fraction of its total client base.

Day Care. ABCD administers year-round daycare programs serving over 200 children and their families in sites throughout the city. Day care services are provided through a variety of funding sources, including basic and supportive child care contracts and vouchers through the new Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (DEEC).

Head Start. Since 1965, ABCD has operated Boston’s principal Head Start program. Currently, ABCD Head Start provides over 2,200 low-income pre-school children and their parents with an integrated program of education, health and social services. ABCD Head Start also serves infants and toddlers through its Early Head Start program, which is focused on the special needs of children and their families from birth to three years.

Head Start programs increasingly offer full-day, full-year services—frequently through the use of “wrap-around” day care funding provided by sources such as Community Partnerships for Children (CPC). CPC funding has also stimulated the development of a broad network of grassroots linkages between ABCD’s 27 Head Start centers and other local child care providers. Through “Community Clusters” which conduct local needs assessment and resource allocation, local lead agencies subgrant CPC funds to community-based organizations, which undertake to meet high quality standards in providing full-time care for children of working parents.

Core Head Start Components. The basic components of the Head Start program include a variety of services designed to support the healthy development of children and families, and to facilitate progress toward family self-sufficiency. These elements include *nutrition; education; family services; parent involvement; health screenings/health education; and special education/mental health.*

Innovative Services. ABCD Head Start continues to develop a wide variety of innovations in the form of demonstration programs. These have included ESL and other adult literacy services for parents; services for children from homeless families; and targeted assistance to children and families affected by a variety of special needs and health conditions, such as asthma. ABCD Head Start has also worked closely with the

Urban College of Boston and LearningWorks to create effective models of staff development.

- *Engaging Fathers.* ABCD has designed a number of innovative services which share goal of bringing fathers into the Head Start experience, and strengthening the role of fathers (especially non-custodial parents) in the lives of children. The “Good Guys” program has sponsored a variety of events, sports activities, and other parent involvement initiatives which demonstrative growing success.
- *PEECE Staff Development Model.* This Federal demonstration grant from the Department of Education has now ended, but it established a basic template for staff education. PEECE outlined distinct levels of staff training, linked to promotion and compensation, and continues to represent a model for professional development in the early care and education field.

Child Care Choices of Boston. As the regional child care resource and referral agency, CCCB provides comprehensive assistance to parents seeking child care in Boston, Chelsea, Revere, Winthrop, and Brookline. CCCB is also the regional voucher management agency for DEEC, issuing and handling reimbursement for child care vouchers provided to welfare recipients and low-income working parents.

In addition to parent services, CCCB also provides assistance to child care providers in enhancing program quality; community education on child care issues; consultation with employers in meeting employee child care needs; and a broad range of training opportunities for child care providers.

- *Professional Development for Informal Providers.* CCCB has developed a successful program designed to provide “informal” child care workers with basic professional skills—and to motivate them to seek licensure.
- *Statewide Conferences.* Recognizing the business challenges confronting small, urban child care providers, CCCB has offered a variety of events, conferences and workshops which address critical day-to-day management issues.

Elderly Services.

ABCD’s Elder Services Department is experiencing a period of rapid growth, change and development as the agency seeks to respond to growing needs among low-income elders.

Foster Grandparents. This program, one of the earliest and most effective of intergenerational service models, has grown to incorporate a range of volunteer opportunities which utilize the talents of low-income elders, while providing them with social and financial support.

The core of the Foster Grandparents program consists of some 200 older, low-income Boston residents who spend 20 hours per week with special needs children and youth. The 46 Boston sites include schools, hospitals, day care centers, battered women's shelters, teen parenting centers, homeless shelters, and other settings in which children and young people need individual support and attention. A major focus of Foster Grandparents activity is promoting literacy in disadvantaged children and youth through one-to-one services at these locations.

Health Insurance Information and Outreach . The Elder Services Department continues to be involved in efforts to provide low-income Boston residents with reliable information on health insurance options and benefits. A series of grants from the National Council on Aging has allowed ABCD to develop a culturally and linguistically adapted program cited by the HHS Center for Medical Services (CMS) as a national model for outreach to Medicare recipients. Building on this success, ABCD became the local contractor for the state's SHINE (Serving the Health Information Needs of the Elderly) program, a peer-driven model which has expanded dramatically under ABCD's management.

Elder Health Promotion. The Elder Services Department has historically sponsored a number of peer-based support and education programs which share a general focus on promoting wellness among elders. Currently, a small number of these programs are operating at local APAC and NSC sites. This is a major focus for expansion during the coming years.

Fall Prevention Initiative. This initiative, funded by the federal Administration on Aging, is part of a state-wide collaboration (led by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs and the Department of Public Health) to promote evidence-based, peer-led health promotion programs for elders. ABCD's role is to test and replicate a model of fall prevention based on peer-led workshops.

Generation of Leaders Demonstration (GOLD) Project. This civic engagement project is ABCD's first volunteer initiative to focus on recruiting volunteers of the "baby boomer" generation. Volunteers work in small, self-directed teams to help solve problems and build new programs at ABCD, utilizing a wide range of professional skills. Boomer volunteers are now active in ABCD's GED and alternative high school programs as well as in the Asset Development Department.

Community Coordination Department

The Community Coordination Department provides oversight and technical assistance to the ABCD neighborhood network of Area Planning Action Councils (APAC's), Neighborhood Service Centers (NSC's) and delegate agencies. Recently, Community Coordination initiated a well-received series of monthly training sessions for

neighborhood staff, with an emphasis on helping case managers connect with other resources in the ABCD system.

The Community Coordination Department also supports resource development and establishment of new linkages through a variety of special projects such as the annual Holiday Toy Drive, and through participation in interagency groups and community boards.

Government and Industrial Relations Department
(Public and Private Resource Development)

The Government and Industrial Relations Department helps to engage the City's corporate community in ABCD programs and services, through sponsorship, volunteerism and participation on Boards and advisory groups.

The Department also plays a major role in new resource development, by informing potential donors about ABCD initiatives and the needs of its clients. Over the past year, for example, Government and Industrial Relations in three of ABCD's most important annual fundraising events—the ABCD Community Awards Dinner, the Field of Dreams softball tournament at Fenway Park, and the “Keeping a Roof over their Heads” charity auction for the Housing and Homeless Services Department. The Department also organized a wide range of other special events with corporate sponsorship, including benefit concerts at the Harborlights Pavilion, and activities at other major sports and entertainment venues.

4.2 ABCD Neighborhood Network

Action for Boston Community Development, Inc. (ABCD) is unique among Community Action Agencies for its network of neighborhood-based service centers. These Area Planning Action Councils (APAC's), Neighborhood Service Centers (NSC's) and Delegate Agencies operate in each of Boston's neighborhoods, and also serve the City's ethnic communities, as shown in the following schematic map.

The distinctions between the local service entities are outlined below.

- *Neighborhood Service Centers.* The Neighborhood Service Centers (NSC's) are ABCD's "field offices", providing a range of services to meet local needs at the grassroots level. NSC's are part of the overall corporate structure of ABCD, but have active neighborhood Advisory Councils, which shape programs, budgets and provide community oversight.
- *Area Planning Action Councils.* The Area Planning Action Councils (APAC's) are separately incorporated 501 (c)3 organizations, established by ABCD to fulfill the purposes of Community Action at the neighborhood level, and closely tied to the present corporation through mission, shared administrative services, and collaborative planning and service delivery structures. Each has a locally-elected Board of Directors which establishes budgets and workplans.
- *Delegate Agencies.* Delegate agencies are fully independent community-based organizations which have entered into contractual arrangements with ABCD to deliver CSBG services in their respective agencies.

As the heart of ABCD's service system, the neighborhood network ensures that all of the resources offered by the agency as a whole are accessible to otherwise under-served populations. By testing new program models, building interagency partnerships at the grassroots level, and informing ABCD's city-wide planning process with a street-level vision of community needs and opportunities, the network also allows ABCD to respond effectively to its diverse and changing client populations.

There is considerable commonality in the services provided through the neighborhood network. For example, the following programs are offered at most or all of ABCD's local sites, because they respond to such widespread needs.

- *Fuel Assistance.* During the heating season, neighborhood sites see a constant stream of applicants for Fuel Assistance (LIHEAP) services. Working in conjunction with the central Energy Department, they make it possible for more than 17,000 low-income residents to get help with heating expenses.
- *SummerWorks.* The neighborhood network also takes applications for ABCD's centrally-managed summer youth employment program, SummerWorks. During

the summer, neighborhood sites provide a base of operations for SummerWorks field managers and counselors.

- *EITC.* The vast majority of free tax assistance services provided by ABCD is delivered through the neighborhood network. During tax season, each participating site recruits volunteers, participates in IRS training, and coordinates with the central Asset Development Department to ensure that taxpayers have access to financial literacy and other wealth-building services. This highly effective partnership reached more than 3,000 taxpayers and returned more than \$5.8 million to communities last year.
- *Holiday Toys and Food Packages.* During the winter holiday season ABCD's neighborhood network distributes thousands of food parcels and toys to the families they serve. Donations for the holiday packages are assembled by the Community Coordination Department.
- *Emergency Food Services.* Over two thirds of ABCD's neighborhood sites operate emergency food pantries; most of the remainder provide other types of direct nutritional services, ranging from hot meals to dollar-a-bag surplus food buying clubs. In addition, the majority of neighborhood sites offer help with on-line Food Stamp applications.
- *Case Management, Information and Referral, and Individual Advocacy.* The majority of the day-to-day work conducted by the neighborhood sites is characterized by one-to-one interaction with walk-in clients who are seeking help with urgent problems. Some of these are one-time interactions. However, many clients develop long-term working relationships with site staff, through which they can be helped to address barriers to self-sufficiency.

Thanks to this shared array of core services, ABCD's local sites are recognizably part of a unified, coherent network. However, since they serve dramatically different communities, their activities differ in response to local needs. On the following pages, a brief discussion is provided of the distinctive local activities of each APAC, NSC, and delegate agency.

Allston/Brighton Area Action Planning Council

The Allston/Brighton APAC is located in the geographic and commercial center of Allston-Brighton, making it highly accessible to the community's changing population, and facilitating a high level of walk-in service.

The APAC continues to be a major provider of child care services in the neighborhood, operating six centers that serve over 300 families, and providing both Head Start and full-day, full-year day care. The APAC has also led in the development neighborhood-based collaborative planning structures for child care services, through the establishment of

local child care providers. As lead agency in the Allston-Brighton Cluster, the APAC manages the distribution of Department of Education “Community Partnerships for Children” funds, and facilitates resource expansion to address emerging needs.

In addition to daycare and Head Start, the agency provides nutrition assistance, fuel assistance, employment services, tax assistance, and family support and advocacy addressing a broad range of issues.

The APAC has specialized in meeting the needs of the diverse and rapidly changing immigrant and refugee populations in Allston-Brighton. APAC staff offer individualized assistance with citizenship, translation and interpretation, job search and daily survival issues.

The APAC also works collaboratively with local agencies and other grassroots groups, with the goals of supporting economic growth and ensuring access to childcare, housing, credit and accessible services for low-income residents.

Asian-American Civic Association

The Asian-American Civic Association is an ABCD Delegate Agency which serves two overlapping populations: the residents of Boston’s Chinatown, and the Asian newcomer and refugee populations in Greater Boston. The Chinatown Neighborhood Service Center, under the auspices of the Asian-American Civic Association (AACA), has provided vital services to the Asian community since its establishment in 1967. The Center estimates that over 90% of the new Asian immigrants in the greater Boston area seek services at AACA during their first year of settlement.

The AACA’s fundamental purpose is to help Asian immigrants and refugees to successfully adjust to life in the United States. To accomplish this aim, the center offers a wide range of services. These include fuel assistance, EITC, summer youth employment, employment counseling, ESL (English as a Second Language), housing assistance, job training and development, immigration and naturalization counseling service, social security assistance, tax preparation, housing counseling, interpretation and translation services, as well as other advocacy activities. The center also publishes SAMPAN, Boston’s only bilingual (English/Chinese) newspaper.

In response to the shifting composition of Asian newcomer groups in Boston, AACA has constantly modified its program of services—and has expanded its own internal capacities. For example, because of the increasing number of Asian refugees suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other forms of mental distress, AACA has developed mental health counseling programs linked to the resources of local teaching hospitals and neighborhood health centers.

AACA also has a significant function in community advocacy, providing a voice for residents who are often politically and economically disenfranchised. This role has been crucial in representing the interests of low-income communities in the rapid commercial

development of downtown Boston. AACA has advocated for direction of a fair share of new housing and other economic benefits to Chinatown, and has mobilized public support for the preservation of Chinatown as an affordable residential neighborhood in which the mutual support available to newcomers is of inestimable value to the wider community.

Boston Hispanic Center

The Hispanic Center serves Spanish-speaking residents of Boston whose national and cultural backgrounds — and needs — differ widely. Services are offered city-wide from a base at ABCD's downtown headquarters.

The Center's service philosophy is based on cultural and linguistic accessibility. Extensive outreach, using print and electronic media as well as personal contacts, helps to ensure the Center's wide recognition, and its culturally congruent atmosphere allows it to be effective in serving clients who may otherwise be hesitant to approach a social service agency.

The Center provides a broad range of services to Boston's growing Latino community. One focus is on providing access to employment and training opportunities to a client population characterized by a large population of youth and young adults. Clients seeking help are primarily monolingual, and despite a great variation in levels of education and vocational experience, most have great difficulty breaking into the formal employment market. To help reduce the obstacles to success, intensive career counseling is provided, as are referrals to skills training, education, or potential employers. The Center conducts special recruitment for the post office, fire department, police department and MBTA; it also offers preparation workshops for civil service examinations.

Because of its broad accessibility, the Center serves as a one-stop resource for many Spanish-speaking families in crisis. Services may be provided to three or four generations of a family; and residents feel comfortable coming to the Center with problems they would not take anywhere else. As a result, much of the Center's work involves facilitating access to other "mainstream" services—providing help with applications, accompanying clients to meetings and interviews, providing counseling, information and referral, and individual advocacy to resolve problems. Many clients contact the Center for help with immigration issues.

As part of Boston's community of Latino service providers, the Center seeks to maximize the impact of its limited resources by networking with other organizations. The Center also serves as an advocate for Latino issues and concerns within the ABCD system, and provides technical assistance to other programs in enhancing their accessibility to Latino populations.

Dorchester Neighborhood Service Center

The Dorchester NSC serves primarily Dorchester, Boston's largest and most populous neighborhood. Consequently, it has historically had a high number of clients, currently serving several thousand households. This NSC has also been notable for the development of new programs and services.

In 2007, the NSC re-occupied its newly renovated headquarters at 110 Claybourne Street, which was destroyed by fire in 2005. Current programs include a variety of nutrition assistance programs, EITC, a growing senior drop-in program, and after-school and summer enrichment programs for children.

East Boston Area Planning Action Council

The APAC has been in the center of its neighborhood for thirty years, developing relationships with families, local leaders, and institutions. As a result, the APAC staff is widely known and trusted — and capable of conducting truly effective individual advocacy for neighborhood residents.

The services provided at the East Boston APAC include employment and education, counseling, access to food and nutrition programs, services for the elderly, taxpayer assistance, and summer jobs for youth; the APAC also operates Head Start in East Boston.

The level of communication between the APAC and its clientele, as well as close ties with local institutions, facilitate the creation of new and sometimes novel services. For example, APAC serves as a host site where the Boston Water and Sewer Commission collects payments and provides face-to-face resolution of customer problems for those residents, especially the elderly, who have limited mobility (and may not have telephones).

The APAC's collaborative programs include a long-standing partnership with the East Boston Community Health Center, through which the APAC has initiated a wide variety of health promotion activities. For example, a campaign to distribute window guards to families with small children is delivered in cooperation with the Health Center.

Jamaica Plain Area Planning Action Council

The Center has been serving families in the Jamaica plain neighborhood since 1965. Throughout its history, the APAC has focused on bringing positive change to its neighborhood one client and one family at a time. The center's goal is to help its clients to become aware of how much power they have over their own circumstances.

The Center's capacity to serve its neighborhood is supported by operation of two physical sites: a storefront facility in the commercial center of Jamaica Plain, and space within the Bromley Health Housing Development.

The Jamaica Plain APAC continues to work closely with local public housing developments, Martha Eliot Health Center, Dimock Health Center, South Jamaica Plain Health Center, and the Brookside Family Life Center, and other providers in the area, maintaining an on-going exchange of information and referrals, and facilitating the development of new, collaborative programs.

On-going programs of the APAC include the Emergency Food Pantry (including a holiday food program and farmer's market coupons); tax assistance; fuel assistance; education, employment and training counseling, placement and referral; and the SummerWorks youth employment program. Efforts to provide ESOL services to the neighborhood's large and rapidly changing immigrant communities are among the most important recent initiatives at the center.

The John F. Kennedy Center

When the Kennedy Center first opened in 1964, it was one of the first multi-service programs in Boston, offering Head Start, fuel assistance, and employment assistance. While this focus has since been expanded—to include programs of advocacy and direct service for the elderly, for youth, and for families in need of counseling—the rationale behind coordinated services delivery has remained the same. In Charlestown, the need for “one-stop shopping” is made more pressing by a longstanding local culture of neighborhood self-reliance, reinforced by the geographic separations between the neighborhood and institutional Boston. In response, the Kennedy Center has taken the lead in developing family-focused case management systems.

Within this framework of service coordination, the Kennedy Center delivers a broad range of services focused on adult education, child care, elder services and family support. A selection of specific programs is discussed briefly below.

- *Preschool and School-Age Child Care.* Year-round, full-day child care programs enable parents to enter or stay in the workforce. Activities for preschoolers include a full educational program based on the Head Start curriculum, a full array of social services, health screenings, mental health, nutrition and parental involvement. For school-aged children, educational, nutritional and recreational services are provided after school hours, and during school vacations, to support working parents.
- *Head Start Program.* As in all Head Start programs, the objective is to provide pre-school age children from very low-income families with an education that improves their abilities to think, reason, communicate and develop self-esteem through meaningful social interaction with others their own age.

- *Adult Education.* The Center provides ESOL classes, computer training, and instruction in Spanish.
- *Senior Services.* Approximately 70 elders are participants in a comprehensive program which offers exercise, recreational activities, transportation, meals and in-home support services.

Mattapan Family Service Center

The Family Service Center combines, under one roof, programs for children youth, and elders. Its case-managed services focus on moving entire families toward economic self-sufficiency. The Center acts as a clearinghouse for information and referrals, and serves as an important focal point in the life of the community.

The Center is in the process of establishing a licensed after school program with a capacity of 26. This program builds on a number of previous projects which offered innovative enrichment programs for children. It also fits with the Center's longstanding commitment to offering licensed preschool care—both through the co-located Head Start program and through wraparound child care services.

Elderly services at the Center continue to represent a major program focus. Specific programs include a “brown bag” food program, day trips, and exercise classes. The staff continues to coordinate these services with the HUD-funded 202 program elderly housing development adjacent to the Family Service Center.

A major area of growth and development over the past three years has been adult education. The Center continues to serve as convener of the local planning network for receipt of Massachusetts Department of Education funds, and has become the dominant provider of these services in Mattapan. Currently the FSC offers three levels of ABE classes and three levels of ESOL classes using DoE funding. Basic computer instruction and work-readiness programs are also provided through other funding sources.

Housing services are also a growth area. The FSC provides homeownership preparation classes to approximately 50 individuals annually. In response to the foreclosure crisis, the Center established a new program to assist threatened homeowners, which has a current capacity of about 50 cases. The Mattapan FSC's expertise in foreclosure prevention has supported ABCD's whole network, with the Center providing training and technical assistance both to other neighborhood sites and to the Asset Development Department.

Other Mattapan FSC programs include fuel assistance, EITc, the SummerWorks jobs program, youth empowerment workshops, and Water and Sewer payment services.

As a leader in the local community, the FEC often finds itself in a coordinating role for multi-agency collaborations. The FSC serves as lead agency for the Mattapan Community Partnerships for Children planning cluster, a coalition of 25 center-based and home-based child care providers. As lead agency, the center coordinates administrative and technical assistance to members, and manages the distribution of CPC resources for subsidized day car slots and staff training.

North End/West End Neighborhood Service Center

This Neighborhood Service Center serves two distinct communities which are separated geographically and culturally: the North End and the West End. Services to the North End are provided from the Center's main site at the former Michelangelo School, now a HUD 202 housing project. In 2008, the NSC opened a second center to serve the West End, as part of a novel collaboration among the City of Boston Commission on Affairs of the Elderly, the West End Museum, and a private developer.

The work of the NSC is primarily intensive case management. While clients at the NSC vary, the majority are elders who need assistance from day to day to live independently. (Others include single mothers who seek direct help with survival services, and younger clients who seek employment and training on their way towards self-sufficiency.) Staff assist clients' efforts to manage crisis situations, obtain assistance with basic needs, and develop new skills in their striving towards increased self-sufficiency. One dominant challenge is helping clients to bridge the language barrier; NSC staff will go to the courthouse, the hospital, and to public and private agencies to translate and advocate for non-English-speaking residents.

Among the broad range of specialized services available to elders are a neighborhood drop-in center and hot meals program; the Hospital Advocacy Corp, which provides culturally and linguistically appropriate advocacy for hospitalized elders; Project Healthy Plus, which offers exercise, nutrition education and peer support; enrichment activities, such as trips and group events; a shuttle bus for grocery shopping; help with access to insurance and benefits; and educational workshops on issues of concern.

The NSC has also continued its services to younger immigrants, who are also isolated by language and culture—and may be further alienated from services because they are frequently undocumented. The NSC offers a range of ESL services, as well as counseling and access to legal assistance, for these younger clients.

Basic services provided by the NSC to all age groups include fuel assistance, information and referral; translation/interpretation; and a variety of emergency food programs including food vouchers and Food Stamp applications.

The NSC has undertaken a variety of new resource development activities over the past three years, providing an excellent example of how a neighborhood center can leverage its local visibility and contacts into support for programs. For example, the Center has

raised over \$120,000 in grants and contracts, and is looking forward to its first annual fundraising event in 2009.

Parker Hill/Fenway Neighborhood Service Center

The Parker Hill/Fenway NSC continues to be a prolific source of creative new programming in support of a low-income community dominated by new immigrants. Services offered include SummerWorks; Fuel Assistance; information and referral; a computer lab for basic office skills trainings; employment and referral services; food programs; a senior drop-in center; EITC; and linkages with a broad variety of local institutions and grassroots organizations.

Immigration services are a major concern in the community, and the NSC is actively building its capacity to offer effective services. A recent grant from the Massachusetts Bar Foundation provides an initial step in this direction.

The Emergency Food Pantry emphasizes providing food of good quality and nutritional value; fresh food is purchased from local supermarkets and food banks, utilizing funds from Project Bread and FEMA, and donated food is collected in food drives by local medical facilities and university programs. Other food programs include a collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture, in which farmers' market coupons are distributed to needy families.

The Senior Drop-in Center offers a basic source of advocacy and social support to isolated, low-income elders. Daily activities include social/recreational events, entertainment, field trips, and nutritious meals prepared on-site. The NSC's community partners also conduct workshops on health issues such as hypothermia, heat exhaustion and the process of aging.

The NSC has also maintained a special emphasis on youth, using a number of peer-based and support group models to create positive alternatives for young people. Workshops on access to higher education have been extremely successful. Financial literacy workshops tailored to young people are a recent innovation.

Roxbury Multi-Service Center

Since 1964, Roxbury Multi-Service Center, Inc., as an independent delegate agency of ABCD, has offered psychological, social health, and educational services to individuals of all ages. Two critical programs provided through the Center are described below.

Family House Shelter. At this transitional housing program, homeless families receive supportive services, including case management, advocacy, housing search, transportation, and training in home management skills.

Community Services and Support Project. Many residents of Greater Roxbury facing severe financial hardship receive help with basic needs such as rent, food clothing, fuel,

utilities, and medical care through the RMSC. To help “repeat users” of emergency services develop the skills which will allow them to reduce the level of crisis in their lives, the Center has initiated a program of one-to-one counseling and group workshops.

Elm Hill Family Service Center

The Elm Hill Family Service Center continues to provide basic services including tax preparation, a food pantry, and fuel assistance, while exploring significant new initiatives in the area of youth services.

Education. The Elm Hill Center’s technology program continues to serve about 50 youth per year, who receive certificates of achievement in computer use. The Summer Literacy program also continues.

Youth Services. The Elm Hill FSC has developed a number of new youth initiatives. These include a summer basketball camp, organized with the support of the Community Coordination Department; the SEEDS Program, which offers a program of career exploration activities for youth ages 12-14; and the EYE Program.

Elder Services. A senior drop-in program serves approximately 60 elders.

South Boston Action Center

The South Boston Action Center has always been focused on supporting the empowerment of neighborhood residents. While basic survival services, including fuel assistance, surplus food, and other kinds of emergency assistance, are provided by the APAC to many residents, the focus of assistance is always on promoting long-term improvements in each family’s capacity to become economically self-sufficient. This agency philosophy is strongly supported by the residents of South Boston — whose neighborhood traditions include a deep sense of family, a willingness to support each other in hard times, and an ingrained respect for education and self-improvement.

The APAC provides day care services and a Head Start program is on-site. From this base, the APAC has built a variety of supports for families. Over the past three years these have included a Family Nurturing Program and creative exercise and gardening programs.

Youth services include a drop-in center, a variety of enrichment activities, and tutoring and test preparation.

Novel approaches to the issues of substance abuse, especially among young people, have been a hallmark of APAC programs over the past three years. The APAC, in collaboration with a broad group of neighborhood partners, has succeeded in obtaining federal funding for continued community organizing efforts, and to train peer leaders in

outreach and education tactics. Clinics and special events to involve both youth and parents in the fight against drugs and alcohol abuse have been well received.

South End Neighborhood Service Center/SNAP

SNAP, ABCD's site in the South End, is undergoing a period of rapid program development. The NSC provides crisis intervention and family development services, including fuel assistance, SummerWorks, emergency food distribution, EITC and access to all of ABCD's basic programs.

SNAP is also one of ABCD's leading areas of activity in work with ex-offenders. Operation Re-Entry works with approximately 125 ex-offenders annually, beginning during the pre-release phase of incarceration. Clients are provided with assistance in establishing themselves in employment and housing, and receive peer support and counseling. Operation Re-Entry also provides basic resources—food, clothing, toiletries and furnishings—to those who have nothing.

SNAP is developing new initiatives in housing assistance, emergency resources and immigration. In 2008-2009, SNAP will work with ABCD's central Housing and Homelessness Department to develop a neighborhood-based model of housing support, serving approximately 50 households. A pilot immigration assistance project will work closely with the Parker Hill/Fenway Center, the Boston Hispanic Center and other sources of expertise in the ABCD network. To supplement the existing food pantry, emergency services will expand through use of on-line Food stamp applications and distribution of baby clothing and furniture (through a new partnership with Cradles to Crayons.)

5.0 THE COMMUNITY PLANNING PROCESS

ABCD sees this Community Action Plan report as the starting point for an ongoing sequence of strategic planning activities which will continue throughout the coming three years. In other words, it is as part of a continuous process of needs assessment, program planning and evaluation. This process will involve agency department heads, vice presidents, and managers but must also incorporate front line staff, case managers, and clients themselves to ensure that the agency stays as responsive to neighborhood-level needs as it has in the past. In formulating this Community Action Plan, we aimed to build an inclusionary process, and our efforts have been enthusiastically received by our colleagues and our clients. We plan to build on this successful relationship as we work towards the our goals and outcome measures contained in this plan, and as we use the Plan as a template for further strategic planning.

5.1 Strategic Planning Model

At the outset of this process, Planning Department staff and Board members discussed the agency's basic approaches to strategic planning and ongoing program improvement, utilizing DHCD's Community Action Plan outline as a model.

The following general steps—derived from DHCD's suggested planning process, and modified somewhat in light of ABCD's requirements as a highly decentralized service system—have been utilized in the 2009-2011 Community Action Planning process. Each is discussed briefly below, and at greater length in the following sections.

- *Planning to Plan.* A core staff planning group, in conjunction with the Neighborhood Program Planning and Evaluation (NPPE) Committee of the ABCD Board of Directors, outlined the broad elements of the CAP process. Information was disseminated to all staff through Department and neighborhood site bulletins.
- *Needs Assessment Activities.* In addition to a comprehensive review of relevant secondary source materials, a range of primary research activities were conducted as part of community needs assessment. Basic elements of the primary research process included: a long form survey of over 500 ABCD clients; 15 focus groups with 150 ABCD clients at 15 neighborhood sites; a staff survey; a Board survey; and one-on-one interviews with managers, Directors and other key staff.
- *Analysis of Needs Data and Development of Agency Strategies.* Identification, analysis and prioritization of community needs began with presentation and intense discussion of both raw and processes needs assessment data. During Summer 2008, data review was conducted with input from over 30 members of the ABCD community, in open meetings facilitated by the Planning Department.

During this process, participants have reviewed ABCD's mission and vision statements and a detailed description of the agency's current service delivery system.

Critical environmental factors—including public attitudes, government actions, and major economic and demographic shifts—have been incorporated in the discussion, and general approaches to linkages, funding strategies, and outcomes evaluations were outlined.

A basic principle reflected in this planning cycle is that that strategic planning must not be a “stop-and-start” activity for an agency of ABCD’s scope and complexity. Participants in the Community Action Planning process are well aware that we are laying the groundwork and the preliminary direction for a dynamic and responsive strategy that will guide the agency’s internal and external policies over the coming years.

5.1 Planning to Plan

The 2009-2011 Community Action Planning process is ABCD’s most ambitious to date. Work began in earnest on developing a Plan framework following the initial Community Action Plan orientation meeting at DHCD in December 2007. Using outlines from previous planning cycles and from DHCD, a Plan timetable and work plan was developed incorporating goals, benchmarks, outcomes and responsibilities. A commitment was made early in the process to expand primary data collection from neighborhood sites and to work closely with site directors in the Planning process.

Weekly meetings within the Planning Department ensured that all principal actors remained informed and that progress remained on schedule. All members of the ABCD community were invited to these meetings.

Building off of earlier planning cycles, in late Spring and Summer 2008, several agency-wide meetings were convened to which representatives from all Departments, APAC’s and NSC’s were invited. At these meetings, facilitated by the ABCD Planning Department, needs assessment data was distributed and discussed; attendees were asked to contribute their impressions of emerging issues of importance to the agency and to issues important to the community; linkage and funding strategies were mooted; and next steps were outlined. Building off of this Community Action Plan document, the movement from Plan to Implementation and Action has been outlined. The foundation of our Community Action Plan meetings, any agency action, and of course, ABCD’s mission, is the need of the Community. Our steps for assessing those needs in this Planning cycle are outlined below.

5.2 Community Needs Assessment

ABCD’s community needs assessment focused on an expanded investigation of personal and community priorities and challenges from the perspective of low-income residents.

Overall Methodology

A multiple methods approach was used in this needs assessment, as in past cycles, with some important modifications. Extensive secondary data were gathered from a more diverse group of sources than before. Three methods were used to gather primary data: focus groups, surveys, and key informant interviews. The diversity of methods allows for different types of data, cross-method confirmation (or dismissal) of certain findings, and for each method's strengths to be utilized and weaknesses to be lessened.

Planning Department staff rewrote the participant survey into a more comprehensive survey of attitudes, experiences, and impressions; distributed the instrument, coded and cleaned the data, and prepared data extracts and analyses. Planning staff also conducted the expanded number of neighborhood based focus groups and interviews with key staff. Finally, they assembled and graphed secondary data from a diverse range of sources, and facilitated the involvement of ABCD staff in the discussion of needs assessment materials.

Secondary Data

In general, the widest possible range of secondary data was assembled, emphasizing the use of current statistical information whenever feasible. 2006 Census data from the American Community Survey, while useful and widely used in research, must be acknowledged with its sampling error. 2000 Census data presents the most comprehensive neighborhood level analyses but has become outdated. With this in mind, alternative data sources were used when possible.

Among the wide range of other sources from which data were abstracted, the following are notable.

- *Health-related data from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the Boston Public Health Commission;*
- *Immigration-related data from the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, Social Security Administration, and Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Coalition;*
- *Drop-out data and test scores from the Boston Public Schools and the Massachusetts Department of Education;*
- *Child care data from OCCS, CCCB and ABCD's Head Start Program;*
- *Public assistance receipt information from the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance;*

- *Boston cost of living data from the American Chamber of Commerce;*
- *Boston homeless census data from the City of Boston Emergency Shelter Commission;*
- *Boston homeownership data from the National Association of Realtors;*
- *Boston crime data from the Boston Police Department; and*
- *Child maltreatment data from the Massachusetts Department of Social Services.*

In order to facilitate group discussion, these and other data sets were presented graphically for review by the ABCD planning groups. (A selection of these graphs and charts is provided as an Attachment to this report).

Primary Data

Four sources of primary data were utilized: focus groups; key informant interviews; an initial staff survey, and a survey of ABCD program participants.

Client Surveys. Surveys were used to collect a very broad base of information on the needs and selected demographic characteristics of persons using ABCD services.

A nine page “participant” questionnaire asking respondents to rank an inventory of possible family and community needs. This survey was extensively rewritten and represents a new direction for ABCD’s Community Needs Assessment. Extensive consultation with outside experts occurred while writing the survey, to ensure that surveying conventions were followed. Reports and academic publications were utilized to develop question phrasing, ordering, and placement. The survey was tested on clients and ABCD staff, and then distributed to sites with an explanatory letter to administrators and a cover letter to clients on the survey itself. Collection boxes were provided to sites along with envelopes to ensure client confidentiality and confidence in the survey process.

Twenty-five ABCD programs and collaborators collected 573 valid surveys from current program participants and/or new applicants for services. Surveys were distributed and returned in English, Spanish, Italian and Cantonese.

All data were entered and cleaned by ABCD Planning Department staff, and statistical analysis was conducted by the Planning Department using SPSS software (summary information from the survey is attached.)

Staff Surveys. An initial staff survey was developed (the instrument is attached.) The survey focused on continuing issues arising in discussion with staff members, including training needs, information needs, best practices in case management, and issues related

to collaborative work across program and Department lines. The survey was augmented by a wide range of informal interviews.

Board Survey. A brief survey tool for use by the ABCD Board of Directors was adapted from models cited by the Northeast Institute for Quality Community Action. (A copy is attached.) The survey was distributed and returned by mail.

Focus Groups. Focus groups were employed to ensure that the assessment included in-depth information from community members and ABCD customers. In this cycle, maximum participation was emphasized: 15 focus groups with 151 participants were conducted by ABCD Planning Department and Program staff. Groups were held in English, Spanish and Cantonese.

Each group was led by one staff facilitator, utilizing a uniform script, while a second staff member took written notes. Each focus group participant was asked to complete a community survey, generally before the group began. At the end of the group, each participant received a stipend in the form of a \$20 gift certificate.

Using the group notes, the ABCD Planning Department developed brief analytical summaries (these are attached.)

5.3 Analysis and Strategy Development

The process of data analysis and strategy development represented in this Community Action Plan has proceeded in three general phases.

- The first phase focused on orienting ABCD stakeholders to the CAP process, and obtaining their feedback.. Early discussions took place among Planning Group members and at a series of Neighborhood Program Planning and Evaluation committee meetings of the ABCD Board of Directors. Concurrently, frequent mailings of information from needs assessment activities were provided to a very broad spectrum of ABCD staff and Board members, along with email updates on the Community Action Plan process.
- The second phase consisted of a focused series of intensive group discussions, resulting in identification of broadly outlined strategic goals. Group and individual meetings were used to review planning data. In general, the planning discussion process proceeded in three steps: *review of needs assessment data, and prioritization of broad issue areas; consideration of unmet needs in terms of ABCD's mission and current services; and identification of potential agency responses—including broad themes for program development in critical issue areas, and organizational innovations which cut across program areas.*

5.4 Ongoing Planning Activities

As noted above, ABCD sees this CAP document as an interim product, “Phase One”, which will be expanded and deepened in “Phase Two.” The elements of this ongoing planning activity are outlined below.

Issue Area Groups. Small working groups have begun the process of developing detailed systems change plans in a number of the key issue areas identified through this CAP process. Groups have been established in the following areas.

Implementation Process. As implementation plans are developed, progress will be tracked and reported on by the issue area groups.

Continued Data Gathering. ABCD’s internal and external audiences continue to express interest in establishing a permanent mechanism for updating and disseminating information on the state of low-income communities in Boston.

Communication. In order to share information about this ongoing process, the Planning Department will continue to issue progress reports and electronic bulletins to all stakeholders.

6.0 COMMUNITY NEEDS AND EMERGING ISSUES

The 2008 Community Action Planning process assembled a broad range of information about the challenges facing low-income individuals, families and neighborhoods in Boston. This data was reviewed and evaluated by a cross-section of direct service staff, program managers, and agency leaders. The process of review touched on both specific issue areas (housing, education, elder services) and cross-cutting issues of service delivery (approaches to case management, fundraising, professional development for staff.)

The following section outlines key issues in each program area, as identified through the initial phase of analysis. As noted above in the discussion of this Community Action Planning process, ABCD staff, constituents and colleagues from the public and private sectors will continue to work on the analysis of these issue areas throughout the program year, with the aim of informing ongoing strategic planning and program design.

6.1 Key Environmental Factors

The brief summaries in the following section highlight some of the salient environmental changes affecting each program issue area. Some environmental factors, however, have had especially wide-ranging impacts on the lives of ABCD's target populations, or have become important in the growth and development of the organization. Some of the factors identified by staff and clients are noted below.

- *Continued limitations in state and federal funding, accompanied in many cases by efforts on the part of public agencies to restructure service delivery and contracting systems.*
- *The emergence of "poverty" as an issue in national political discourse, along with related movements to reduce poverty rates, end homelessness, and otherwise accomplish major, quantifiable improvements in the lives of disadvantaged persons.*
- *The impact of the simultaneous cost crises in housing and energy—both on individual low-income households and on communities.*
- *The continued growth of immigrant and refugee populations, especially undocumented residents, and ongoing concerns about their access to public services.*
- *The continued decline in the economic situation of low-wage workers, accompanied by increases in the entry-level skill requirements for jobs that pay a living wage.*

Macro-Scale Factors and Advocacy. As this Community Action Planning process has gone on, it has underlined a basic tension in the work of ABCD (and other Community Action Agencies.) While most of the agency's anti-poverty work is conducted with individuals at the local level, the forces which keep individuals poor are largely related to large-scale macroeconomic trends and trends in public policy. These are beyond the capacity of any single social service agency to address.

Throughout this planning process, participants spoke about this disparity of ends and means. The conclusions drawn by the planning groups which discussed the issue were twofold.

- Because local action is not enough, there is a continued need for ABCD to play an active role in helping to shape public policy.
- Because large-scale social change is needed to promote economic opportunity, ABCD must continue to empower communities to undertake advocacy on their own behalf.

In short, ABCD's historical commitment to community organizing was seen as critical to the future of the agency and its constituents.

6.2 Discussion of Strategic Challenges and Opportunities by Issue Area

The following sections summarize a selection of the outstanding needs and concerns identified by program area, as well as some of the most salient issues cutting across multiple program areas.

Employment and Training

ABCD has historically been deeply involved in the delivery of specialized workforce development and job placement services for low-income residents of Boston, a role which continues to be at the core of the agency's mission. This role has, however, always been a difficult one.

Job Losses and Labor Market Fluctuations. Over the past three years the Boston employment market has seen significant volatility. Continuing losses in the local industrial base have been offset, in some specific sub-industries and job classifications, by short-term spurts in demand (such as, for example, the current unmet need for welders, machine operators and other skilled craftsmen in the tool-and-die industry). Some major sectors, such as financial services and retail, have been shaken by mergers and significant contractions, but may be poised to grow again. Rapid changes such as these have challenged the nonprofit training community to develop much more flexible programs, able to re-tool and restructure to meet employer needs. They have also driven

home the need for training to build stronger employer connections, if they are to help low-skill workers find jobs with a future.

Failures in Labor Market Preparation. Against the background of shifting labor markets, the needs of low-income Boston residents seeking family-sustaining work stand out in sharp relief.

- The lack of fundamental literacy and numeracy skills on the part of many workers continues to limit their employability, even in entry-level jobs. At the same time, entry-level skill requirements are escalating sharply in many industry areas.
- The increasing difficulty of accessing higher education means that too many Boston youth and adults are entering the labor market with only a high school education. Increasingly, this is not enough to obtain a job with a living wage.
- There continue to be gaps between employer needs and skills training program offerings. New initiatives such as the career ladder programs funded by SkillWorks are helping to align the needs of employers with the services offered by training providers—offering an important template for new program development.
- In some Boston neighborhoods, joblessness—sometimes lifelong joblessness—is the norm. Employers and training organizations continue to see a lack of understanding of basic workplace norms of behavior on the part of workers whose life experience has left them isolated from the conventional world of work.

Education

For over twenty years, ABCD has provided specialized educational services to meet the needs of youth and adults who are not well served by conventional secondary schools and colleges.

Lagging Achievement and High Drop-Out Rates. Boston's drop-out rates are extraordinarily high—and dropouts have few good economic options.. Interest in alternative programs, which provide struggling students with an alternative, or offer a second chance to students who have dropped out (such as ABCD's University School and Ostiguy High) is increasing, but frequently new resources are directed to public school systems rather than community-based providers.

Barriers to Higher Education. While a college education remains by far the most reliable indicator of the ability to earn a middle-class income, access to college is

becoming more limited. The costs of private colleges, coupled with reduced availability of loans, Pell Grants and other assistance, has reduced the higher education options accessible to youth from poor families. Low-income students are also entering college with more severe needs for social service support, fewer economic assets, and continuing academic deficits which must be remediated before they begin “college-level” work.

Emergency Services

ABCD’s entire network is strongly attuned to meeting emergency needs on the part of low-income families. In many of Boston’s neighborhoods, the local ABCD office — the Area Planning Action Council (APAC) or Neighborhood Service Center (NSC) — is the first place a family in crisis will apply for assistance. At the same time that the ABCD system attempts to help families and individuals access the basic requirements for survival, it is challenged to move beyond this level of intervention—to raise family incomes, to assist families in building durable assets, and to enable families to move toward long-term self-sufficiency.

Indications of Continued Economic Distress. A number of indicators suggest that increasing numbers of low-income Boston households have been driven closer to the edge of economic survival. These include increases in the utilization of food pantries; high rates of shelter admissions; increased requests for fuel assistance and other kinds of cash or cash-equivalent assistance; and rising numbers of calls to emergency hotlines. The continued high level of need is clearly related not only to the decreasing capacity of low-wage jobs to support the basic expenses of family life, but to recent crises in the costs of housing and fuel.

Housing

ABCD’s activity in the field of housing has developed in two directions: bricks-and-mortar production of affordable housing, which has been limited due to market and funding factors, and “housing services”, focused on helping families and individuals in crisis find and keep affordable housing. Housing production has continued to be specialized in the development of HUD-funded elderly housing—which has become more difficult, but still feasible. ABCD’s housing services, including housing search and homelessness prevention, have been buffeted by changes in the way contracts are administered by the City and State. At the same time statewide efforts to reduce homelessness have provided welcome attention to concerns about homelessness prevention.

Continued Affordability Crisis. The overall housing picture for low-income residents of Boston is characterized by a continued scarcity of affordable rental and ownership housing stock, despite some slight increases in the rental vacancy rate over the past two years. The affordability crisis has driven near-record numbers of families into emergency

shelters, and forced the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) to begin placing families in large numbers in “welfare hotels” for the first time since 2004.

Limited Production. With the nearly complete withdrawal of state and federal authorities from the business of creating housing, production of affordable housing remains extremely slow, despite efforts such as Boston’s to use some local revenues to fill the gap.

Restructuring of DTA Contracts. A new state administration has initiated a sequence of dramatic changes in the structure and administration of contracts serving homeless families, and these have had challenging impacts on the operation of ABCD services. The most recent DTA contract for housing assistance eliminated “homelessness prevention” as an allowable activity. It also created performance-based reimbursement structures which made financial planning a challenge. Currently, DTA is in the process of completely restructuring its contracts for the delivery of services to homeless families. This process, while offering welcome opportunities for new partnerships and creative program design, will inevitably disrupt the existing statewide system of housing search and stabilization resources.

Emphasis on Regional Coordination from the Interagency Commission on Housing and Homelessness. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has set an aggressive goal for reducing homelessness. Through a new RFP process, the state beginning the development of regionalized networks in which agencies will work together to accomplish this goal. ABCD is working with other local actors, including the City of Boston Emergency Shelter Commission, the Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership, and emergency shelters, to develop a comprehensive homelessness reduction system for Boston.

Nutrition

ABCD has historically provided basic nutrition resources to the low-income communities of Boston through food pantries, meals programs and other food distribution projects. Over the past three years, ABCD began a concerted effort to shift some of its effort in the area of nutrition to longer-term intervention through nutrition education—as well as linking nutrition programs to other supports for family self-sufficiency, such as financial literacy training. In addition, ABCD became a key Boston player in attempts to increase utilization of Food Stamps and other public nutrition entitlements.

Continued Unmet Basic Needs. Crisis levels of nutritional need have continued in Boston over most of the past three years, according to authoritative sources such as Project Bread. Emergency requests received by the city’s network of food pantries reached new highs, and significant malnutrition continues to be reported by medical researchers working with infants and young children in the city’s most deprived neighborhoods.

Some Improvements in Utilization of Anti-Hunger Resources. Over many years ABCD has worked with Project Bread and a number of other agencies in the Boston Food Stamp Coalition to implement on-line Food Stamp applications at ABCD sites. These and related outreach programs have contributed to a major increase in Food Stamp utilization.

Increasing Evidence Linking Poor Nutrition to Poor Health. Over the past three years continued attention has been focused on the connections between nutritional issues facing poor Americans and significant health problems—including, for example, higher rates of obesity, cardiovascular disease and diabetes. This has encouraged the service provider community to see obesity and other results of unwise food choices as problems of poverty. ABCD has designed a range of specialized nutrition education programs as part of an effort to respond systematically to this area of health disparities.

Health

ABCD has historically seen health services in the broad context of poverty, social disadvantage, and discrimination. Over the past three years, ABCD has continued to be involved in systemic responses to racial and ethnic health disparities. An increasingly important area of concern for ABCD's consumers has been access to health insurance through new state systems, and continued assistance to elders faced with complex insurance choices.

Health and Poverty: A Complex Connection. It has long been recognized by researchers and practitioners in a variety of fields that health status—including morbidity and mortality from many specific conditions—is directly affected by poverty. In practice, the causal connection also operates in the opposite direction: poor health helps to trap people in poverty.

Major Causes of Morbidity and Mortality. In the low-income communities of Boston, public health statistics suggest that the most critical health issues among adults continue to include violence; AIDS/HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases; heart disease, especially hypertension among people of color; preventable cancers, including lung cancer traceable to cigarette smoking; and addictions. The closely related issue of pregnancy prevention is of concern among adults and adolescents. Among children, concerns include continuing high rates of prematurity and failure to thrive, often linked to malnutrition; asthma; and the physical and psychological effects of violence.

Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities. The roots of health disparities, while complex, clearly involve individual and institutional racism, health education issues, problems with access to treatment and quality of treatment, and income-related issues. This complexity calls for a comprehensive, multi-factoral approach to the resolution of disparities, one which needs to involve a wide range of local institutions as well as health care providers.

Pressures on Health Care Institutions. The health care institutions utilized by Boston's low-income residents continue to be subject to enormous market pressures which threaten

the quality of care. Access to care—and, in the particular, access to the preventative services which are most effective and most cost efficient—is constantly threatened both by the erosion of stable funding for public health institutions.

Changes and Inequities in Medical Insurance. Access to quality medical care for working people with low incomes continues to be a significant problem, despite the implementation of a “universal health insurance” statute. ABCD has continued to play a leading role in monitoring the impacts of health care reform.

Child Development

Childcare-related services currently represent the largest proportion of all ABCD activities.

A Critical Factor in Self-Sufficiency. The issue of child care is of unparalleled importance in the struggle for family self-sufficiency. Without adequate and appropriate child care, the current generation of heads-of-household cannot compete in the job market; without access to appropriate nurturing and early education, the next generation will be unable to succeed at school or at work.

Continued Problems with Supply and Demand. Despite its criticality, child care in Boston remains an area of widespread market failure. At present, this failure is not solely one of overall supply, but of quality, the availability of specialized kinds of care, and access to subsidies.

Informal and Family-Based Care as Risk and Opportunity. The dependence of Boston’s child care networks on “informal” child care remains a source of concern. (Informal child care refers to that which is provided by an unlicensed friend, relative or neighbor, and reimbursed by at a lower, “baby-sitting” rate through its voucher system). While in many cases informal care is a good solution for parents, quality care is impossible to ensure. At a less severe level, family child care (which is licensed) represents an asset and a challenge. Family child care operations can offer excellent quality, and they have advantages of small size and homelike atmosphere; they are also a major source of entrepreneurial opportunity for inner-city households. Family providers, however, often have limited training in early childhood education or in business management, and they characteristically have limited resources.

New Public-Sector Structures. ABCD’s child care programming has been affected by continuing change in the structure of public systems administering state child care program. Currently ABCD leadership is represented on the Massachusetts Early Education and Care Commission.

In addition, the structure of the field has changed significantly with the entry of public schools into the delivery of pre-school services on a large scale. Schools and teachers

more familiar with older children frequently are not prepared to deliver developmentally-appropriate educational experiences to very young children, creating issues of quality which are difficult for low-income consumers to assess. In addition, schools can in effect compete for a limited population of preschool children, making recruitment for means-tested programs such as Head Start more difficult.

Critical Workforce Concerns. The recruitment and retention of a high-quality workforce continues to be a major challenge for all early care and education providers, especially those whose resources are limited by the strictures of public funding. Increasing hurdles are represented by new Head Start regulations which will require classroom workers to have much higher levels of educational attainment in future years.

ABCD Head Start, in combination with the Urban College of Boston and ABCD's workforce development programs, continues to explore models of training and career ladder development which can bring new workers into the field

Elderly Services

The elderly poor have been a concern of ABCD's since its inception. They are served through the Department of Elder Services, as well as through senior programming in many neighborhood sites.. Centralized programs, such as Fuel Assistance, also involve a high percentage of elderly persons; and in the APAC/NSC network, elders form a large subset of the client base.

Special Burdens of the Elderly Poor. ABCD recognizes that for elders in Boston, the social isolation and functional disabilities associated with aging are often greatly complicated by poverty. In communities of concentrated poverty, elders are less likely to have the secure support of an extended family. They are much more likely to have suffered cumulative physical disabilities, especially from chronic or inadequately treated conditions. Low-income elders are also more likely to be shouldering additional responsibilities for grand children or for a disabled spouse or child.

Limitations of the Elder Service System. Publicly-funded structures for services to elders-- including local Councils on Aging and the Home Care Corporations (ASAPs), which are focused specifically on the needs of low-income frail elders—are well-established in Boston and across the Commonwealth. But in Boston as elsewhere, the public services on which elders may depend—for in-home services, medical care, transportation, nutrition support—are often overstrained by high demand and low levels of funding. And as many local observers have noted, this service system can be fragmented and difficult to navigate.

The Changing Nature of Aging and the Need for New Roles. The situation of the elderly poor in Boston is being impacted by larger-scale changes in the social context of aging. Across the income scale, elders are living longer, remaining active longer and working longer (whether from choice or necessity). These patterns are driving the growth

of new models of supportive housing, late-life employment and community service, among other innovations. Perhaps most important, social and demographic change requires that the service provider community increasingly relate to elders as workers, leaders and contributors rather than primarily as service recipients. A significant effort in this area is the GOLD volunteer program focused on retired Baby Boomers.

Major Changes in Insurance and Entitlement Systems. Entitlement and social insurance programs (Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security) are either experiencing significant change or are likely targets for future restructuring. Elders are among the groups most dramatically affected by such changes—leading to new demand for sophisticated benefits counseling, outreach, and assistance in applying for and maximizing benefits. ABCD’s Elder Services Department continues to create new resources adapted to elders’ changing information needs, including recent expansion of the SHINE program.

Need for Health Promotion. Low-income elders face increased rates of morbidity and mortality from chronic disease. They are also at risk of serious injury from accidents or criminal victimization which can lead to increased functional limitation and frailty. Low-cost interventions that improve self-care and reduce the chance of injury are among the most cost-effective ways to keep older people independent and reduce their health care burden. ABCD is continuing its historical commitment to preventive services based on community education and peer support through new programs such as Fall Prevention.

Economic Development

Economic development can be addressed on two levels. On the “macro” level, ABCD has always been concerned with Boston’s economic development — and, particularly, with tactics for harnessing the momentum of economic development to support job creation, stability and income growth in low-income neighborhoods. On the “micro” level, ABCD is concerned with moving families toward self-sufficiency by building income and assets.

Regional Economic Issues. Boston’s regional economy is at a critical juncture, as globalization and mergers in major industries continue to challenge the traditional business base. While boom times have often had little “trickle-down” impact on Boston’s poor, the continued prospect of business losses is a direct threat. Consequently, Boston’s anti-poverty agency has an enormous stake in the wider dialogue on Boston’s economic future.

Barriers to Family Asset Development. Parallel issues beset families and individuals. In many of Boston’s inner-city neighborhoods, rates of saving, homeownership, and business ownership continue to be very low. Predatory lending continues to be a significant problem. On a more basic level, the rate at which inner-city residents have access to basic financial tools, such as checking accounts or credit cards, is low enough to inhibit movement up the economic ladder. Fundamental financial literacy—which provides one of the basic building blocks of self-sufficiency—is a continuing unmet need.

ABCD's establishment of a new Asset Development Department offering financial education, supported savings accounts, homeownership preparation and foreclosure prevention is an important first step toward integrating wealth-building services with other ABCD initiatives.

Groups Systematically Excluded from Opportunity. Within the universe of low-income households in Boston, specific populations face particularly intransigent obstacles to long-term self-sufficiency. Three of these specific populations have emerged as special concerns through ABCD's ongoing needs assessment activities.

- *Undocumented Immigrants.* Boston's undocumented population appears to be growing. Paradoxically, while undocumented workers are being employed in greater numbers, they are at increasing economic risk. Their inability to access education and training makes it difficult if not impossible for them to advance economically; their lack of insurance or work-related benefits makes them vulnerable to health or other emergencies; and they are prey to many types of exploitation and discrimination.
- *Ex-Offenders.* Over the past years, the number of ex-offenders being released into Boston's neighborhoods has soared. These individuals have access to very few resources for legitimate work and positive personal growth. As ABCD's SNAP Re-Entry Project has documented, the jobseeker with a "bad CORI" characteristically experiences enormous difficulty finding even an entry-level job.
- *Persons on Fixed Incomes.* Individuals receiving public benefits are almost universally seeing the purchasing power of their incomes eroded by inflation—while at the same time they have few options for becoming more self-sufficient.
- *Persons Excluded from Benefits Due to "Cliff Effects."* Current research from the Women's Educational and Industrial Union suggests that there is a significant population of low-income individuals who exceed the income limits for major public benefits by small amounts, and are as a result in an especially difficult financial predicament. These individuals may have difficulty assembling the basic social capital needed to advance economically, while finding few supports for basic survival needs

7.0 THREE-YEAR GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The strategic goals identified through this process fall into three general categories:

- cross-cutting themes which cut across individual program categories;
- internal goals related to agency capacity-building and coordination, and
- a range of specific initiatives in each program area.

These responses are, in turn, supported by a set of general systematic strategies for building new programs, resources, and capacities.

7.1 Agency-wide Goals

A series of agency-wide initiatives were identified as priorities. Among the problem areas targeted were internal coordination issues, training, marketing, resource development, and interagency linkages. In many respects, the agency-wide themes continue to be congruent with the areas of emphasis noted in the last Community Action Plan.

Goals in Case Management and Service Coordination. The critical role of case management was one of the most active areas of discussion. A constant theme in these discussions was the need for a system of **integrated service delivery**. The elements of an integrated service delivery system, as identified by participants in the planning process, included:

- a “no wrong door” structure in which clients can access all services by coming to any ABCD site;
- Active use of the Neighborhood Network for recruitment and service delivery, and increased collaboration between the Network sites and centrally-managed programs;
- a uniform tool for assessing client needs;
- sources of readily available information on all ABCD services (including eligibility requirements) for both clients and case managers;
- a more systematic and formalized process for making and following up on referrals;
- the capacity to identify a single lead case manager;
- mechanisms for tracking client use of services across the agency and sharing information about clients; and
- mechanisms for case conferencing to develop joint service plans;

Based on these discussions, a key overarching goal identified was:

- *To put in place the elements of an integrated service system at ABCD.*

Participants also identified the following related goals:

- *To promote effective case management through documentation and replication of best practices;*
- *To produce a variety of information tools for clients and workers, detailing available ABCD services, referral processes and eligibility requirements;*
- *To promote consistency by creating standardized forms, procedures and standards documented in print, and used in agency-wide training; and*
- *To ensure that client tracking and data collection systems promote good case management—for example, by providing capacity for longitudinal tracking of client outcomes, especially with respect to the agency-wide overall goal of lifting households out of poverty.*

Goals in Staff Support. Participants discussed the continuing need to provide more effective supports to staff members working directly with customers, especially in support of integrated service delivery.

As many participants noted, the pressures on front-line staff—especially those in the Neighborhood Network—are increasing as more customers come to the front door, with increasingly urgent and complex needs. Yet the resources available to meet these needs are not growing (and sometimes shrinking.) In addition, front-line staff may be new to the agency; they may have limited experience and/or professional education; and frequently they are working in relative isolation. These factors inevitably lead to stress and the risk of burnout.

Similarly, front-line supervisors and new managers face an increasingly severe array of stresses. Not only must they do more with less, they are often under pressure to meet extremely challenging goals related to performance-based contracting. Working with stressed staff, clients in crisis and demanding program parameters, they need effective training and support.

The following goals were identified:

- *To provide stronger initial training options (incorporating information about ABCD programs, as well as general skills related to the job) for front-line staff and new managers;*
- *To provide ongoing professional development options for all employees;*

- *To promote esprit de corps through an enhanced initial orientation process, emphasizing the agency's unique mission; and increased opportunities for staff recognition;*
- *To encourage staff interaction through informal opportunities for information-sharing and socialization;*
- *To study staff caseloads with the aim of setting appropriate and increasingly uniform standards.*

Goals in Resource Development. All ABCD divisions expressed unmet needs for resources to expand and strengthen their programs.

However, the planning discussions in this CAP cycle made it clear that resource needs are very different in different setting across the agency. For example, some centralized programs, such as the Housing and Homeless Services Department, are experiencing severe, sudden fiscal stress as long-standing contracts are changing or shrinking. Other central departments, such as Education and Training, have adapted to a constant competitive struggle for relatively small, short-term grants. Yet others, such as Elder Services, are moving beyond the secure base of long-term contracts (in this case, ABCD's Foster Grandparents program) to new program areas, and in the process encountering high levels of competition from other nonprofit agencies.

The Neighborhood Network faces a unique set of resource limitations. As individual sites, each has a modest base of CSBG funding. But this is not increasing, and as costs rise it is no longer sufficient to maintain historic levels of service. While some APACs and NSCs have been very successful in bringing in new revenues, others are new to the process of fundraising. They also face significant fundraising challenges. Most of their services, while critical to the welfare of families and neighborhoods, are not novel—and thus not appealing to many foundations. Frequently they are in competition with many other local organizations. And they must balance their identities as part of ABCD's system with the reality that some funding sources are more interested in supporting small, grass-roots entities.

Every ABCD unit concerned with fundraising also needs to grapple with the challenge of reconciling the interests and goals of funding sources with the mission and focus of the unit. Most managers recognize that seeking new funding usually requires a "stretch" to adapt to the funder's requirements. However, when this goes too far, it can lead to "chasing the money" in ways which distract from the core mission. Participants in this CAP process noted the need to carefully consider new funding initiatives as part of an overall plan for organizational development.

To help meet these needs, the following goals were identified:

- *To develop specific, detailed fundraising plans for all divisions, and for the Neighborhood Network;*

- *To foreground the activities of the Neighborhood Network in presentations of the agency's work and in fundraising;*
- *To continue strengthening grants-seeking activities through staff training and access to skilled grant-writers;*
- *To increase agency-wide information-sharing and planning around fundraising activity;*
- *To develop effective print marketing tools, including more polished case statements;*
- *To improve agency-wide capacity for fundraising list management and tracking of fundraising activities;*
- *To build on the agency's successful track record of special events by ensuring that all divisions sponsored at least one fundraising event annually.*

Goals in Linkage Development. In many agency program areas, participants cited the continuing need to network with other organizations, build positive partnerships, and support effective coalition approaches to problem-solving. The following goals were identified:

- *To ensure that managers and leaders in each program area have a linkage plan in place;*
- *To provide shared information about linkages and inter-agency partnerships across the agency; and*
- *To budget resources and staff time for increased visibility in critical program areas.*

Goals in Advocacy and Community Organizing. Participants in the planning process advocated enthusiastically for increased investment in ABCD's traditional roles of public policy advocacy and community organizing. The following goals were suggested:

- *To publicly affirm ABCD's continued commitment to community empowerment;*
- *To provide training for staff and consumers in tactics and strategies of community organizing;*

- *To continue to integrate public policy advocacy with the development of direct service programs in each of the issue areas important to ABCD;*
- *To establish and maintain policy leadership positions in the areas of poverty reduction, energy policy, youth services, elder services, access to health care, early care and education, and homelessness reduction.*

Goals in Outreach and Marketing. Participants raised a number of concerns about ABCD's image and visibility with key audiences—including policy-makers, low-income residents, and other service providers. The following goals were identified:

- *To discuss core values and programs, especially across the Neighborhood Network, and to undertake an in-depth discussion of “branding” agency services;*
- *To consider formal adoption of an updated mission statement appropriate to marketing purposes;*
- *To invest in creating more visibility for the agency in selected settings, including both local neighborhoods and settings related to public policy formation around poverty and key program areas;*
- *To emphasize the role of the Neighborhood Network in visibility efforts;*
- *To investigate ABCD's image and recognition through a focused market study; and*
- *To create a more compelling public image for ABCD through a comprehensive marketing strategy.*

Goals in Planning, Information-Gathering, and Evaluation. To continue the process of “institutionalizing” strategic planning, the CAP process identified five major areas of activity for the next three years.

- *Establishment of ongoing agency-wide strategic planning, including continued program development through issue area work groups.*
- *Continuous needs assessment activity on the local level, including original research and periodic updating of community profiles.*
- *Streamlining of data collection and information management (including resolution of CSBG client data compatibility issues) to allow for uniform capture of client characteristics, service and outcomes data.*

- *Increased emphasis on the use of customer satisfaction surveys to provide feedback and opportunities for “course correction” in current programs.*
- *Increased use of long-range outcomes measures focused on gains in family self-sufficiency.*

7.2 Program Area Goals

Specific program area goals include the following.

The following goals for addressing the needs of underserved populations were suggested:

- *To continue expanding the capacity of ABCD services to reach new immigrants and linguistic minorities with appropriate services; and*
- *To develop a wider range of programs meeting the needs of ex-offenders, especially men.*

In the area of Adult Education and Training,

- *To develop a wider range of sectoral skills training programs through enhanced partnerships with employers, unions and institutions of higher education;*
- *To link youth services and adult skills training through an expanded array of “career exploration” options; and*
- *To continue development of a coordinated system of adult education services, especially ESOL, through strengthening neighborhood-based resources in this area.*

In the area of Housing,

- *To respond to the massive restructuring of publicly-funded services for homeless families by developing and implementing a comprehensive “Housing First” model;*
- *To establish, through partnership with the Boston Homelessness Prevention Clearinghouse and other organizations, expanded resources for preventing family homelessness; and*

- *To support new supportive housing development through continued leadership of HUD 202 projects.*

In the area of Income and Self-Sufficiency Issues,

- *To expand the resources available to the Asset Development Department;*
- *To link asset development to other ABCD program areas, including Head Start, Housing and Homeless Services, and Adult Education and Training*
- *To support development of statewide systems of support and coordination for asset development.*

In the area of Health Services,

- *To significantly expand efforts to reduce racial and ethnic health disparities;*
- *To continue developing peer support and peer education models of health promotion; and*
- *To promote development of and access to affordable and appropriate health insurance and health care.*

In the area of Elder Services,

- *To expand civic engagement and community service opportunities for elders;*
- *To develop new peer and community support resources for elders, especially with respect to health promotion and care-giving; and*
- *To create more robust and better-integrated services for elders across the ABCD Neighborhood Network.*

In the area of Child Development,

- *To sustain access to high-quality, full-day, full-year child care services for families in underserved communities; and*
- *To continue development of affordable educational options and career ladders for child care professionals.*

In the area of Youth Services,

- *To expand youth employment programs, emphasizing the effective model of “career exploration; and*
- *To create increased options for full-year, comprehensive youth development services.*

In the area of Secondary and Post-Secondary Education,

- *To establish improved linkages to post-secondary education for low-income working adults and at-risk youth; and*
- *To develop expanded resources for youth who are not successful in conventional public school settings through securing the economic base for ABCD’s alternative high schools.*

In the area of Energy Services,

- *To advocate for increased resources for emergency fuel assistance;*
- *To plan collaboratively with other agencies and institutions for anticipated heating emergencies; and*
- *To ensure that low-income consumers benefit from new technologies in renewable energy and conservation.*

7.2 Strategic Approaches

In each specific program area, ABCD’s staff and other stakeholders have developed broad strategic approaches, and have also identified priority initiatives.

8.0 EVALUATION AND CSBG MEASURES

ABCD is committed to ensuring that its CSBG services are outcome driven and that a broad range of evaluative information—including program outcomes, client tracking statistics, and customer satisfaction feed back—is captured to support ongoing program development.

Status of CSBG ROMA Measures

Use of NGOMs and National Indicators. Over the period 1996-1999, all ABCD programs adopted CSBG National Goals and Outcome Measures. Beginning in FY97, individual program workplans incorporated NGOMs, and in FY99 all programs were reporting year-end outcomes in the terms required by CSBG.

In 2005 ABCD management and program staff were introduced to the CSBG National Indicators (NIs) through a series of trainings and individual coaching sessions. NIs were fully integrated in the agency's FY2006 Work Plan and all subsequent Work Plans.

Data Systems. In 2005, ABCD implemented ACTS, a proprietary software product designed to simplify collection of NGOM and NI outcomes, in addition to client demographics and service utilization data.

Process for Selection of Measures. The process for NGOM/NI identification at the level of local programs and service centers includes group and individual training provided by ABCD Planning, and by national technical assistance resources provided through DHCD.

Since the process of outcomes selection is conducted at the grassroots level, Board and Advisory Committee staff at each Neighborhood Service Center and Area Planning Action Council review and approve the NGOM/NI workplan elements. (ABCD's city-wide Board of Directors also participates in the process through ongoing discussion, especially on the part of the Neighborhood Program Planning and Evaluation Committee of the Board.)

In order to facilitate the process of tracking and reporting outcomes, the ABCD Planning Department prepares customized information packages for each central department and APAC or NSC, incorporating detailed instructions and, where indicated, survey or tracking instruments designed to match the selected NGOMs/NIs.

Next Steps in Evaluation

As noted above, the long-term evaluative process supported by the CSBG outcome measures is seen by ABCD as one of several pathways for continuous feedback and program improvement; others include customer satisfaction feedback and monitoring of client numbers and service levels.

List of National Indicators to be Used. Currently ABCD utilizes all National Indicators.

The following National Indicators will appear throughout CSBG workplans submitted by ABCD and its neighborhood network of APAC's, NSC's, and delegate agencies.

#	National Indicator
1.1	Employment
1.2	Employment Supports
1.3	Economic Asset Enhancement and Utilization
2.1	Community Improvement and Revitalization
2.2	Community Quality of Life and Assets
3.1	Civic Investment
3.2	Community Empowerment through Maximum Feasible Participation
4.1	Expanding Opportunities through Community-Wide Partnerships
5.1	Broadening the Resource Base
6.1	Independent Living
6.2	Emergency Assistance
6.3	Child and Family Development

10. FUNDING STRATEGY

ABCD has achieved a high degree of leveraging using CSBG funds, with each CSBG dollar supporting over \$24.40 from other sources (this has increased from \$18 in the past three years). Non-CSBG funds comprise over 100 separate public and private sources.

Overall, however, the preponderance of ABCD funding is public. The following is the breakdown in detail:

- *24% of revenues are derived from direct Federal sources,*
- *51% from Federal resources flowing through the state,*
- *1% from Federal sources flowing through the City of Boston,*
- *28% from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts,*
- *11% from other grants,*
- *4% from other revenues and*
- *1% from individual contributions.*

ABCD utilizes Community Service Block Grant funds in two basic ways:

- *To provide a stable core of funding for critical activities which have no other readily available, ongoing support.*
- *To provide initial support or “seed money” for major innovations in service delivery, allowing for the development of long-term support.*

For the period of 2006 - 2008 ABCD has established the following general goals for new resource development.

- *To enhance the efficiency of CSBG funding, by increasing the leveraging ratio to approximately 1:30 over the three-year period.*
- *To expand the agency’s range of funding sources by approximately 10% over the three-year period.*
- *To significantly increase the proportion of the agency’s funding which is derived from non-government revenues over the three-year period.*

In support of these goals, the agency has identified several major initiatives in the area of development. These include:

- *Expansion of individual, foundation and corporate solicitation for selected programs and for broad institutional purposes, and*
- *Extension of expanded technical assistance in fundraising to Departments and APAC’s/NSC’s.*